

DOMESDAY BOOK

EDGAR LEE MASTERS



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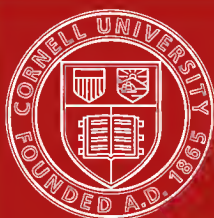
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# DOMESDAY BOOK

BY  
EDGAR LEE MASTERS

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SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY  
SONGS AND SATIRES  
TOWARD THE GULF  
THE GREAT VALLEY  
STARVED ROCK



# DOMESDAY BOOK

BY  
EDGAR LEE MASTERS

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1920

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TO MY FATHER  
**HARDIN WALLACE MASTERS**  
SPLENDID INDIVIDUAL OF  
**A PASSING SPECIES — AN AMERICAN**



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**DOMESDAY BOOK**





## DOMESDAY BOOK

Take any life you choose and study it :  
It gladdens, troubles, changes many lives.  
The life goes out, how many things result ?  
Fate drops a stone, and to the utmost shores  
The circles spread.

Now, such a book were endless,  
If every circle, riddle should be traced  
Of any life — and so of Elenor Murray,  
Whose life was humble and whose death was tragic.  
And yet behold the riddles spread; the lives  
That are affected, and the secrets gained  
Of lives she never knew of, as for that.  
For even the world could not contain the books  
That should be written, if all deeds were traced,  
Effects, results, gains, losses, of her life,  
And of her death.

Concretely said, in brief,  
A man and woman have produced this child ;  
What was the child's pre-natal circumstance ?  
How did her birth affect the father, mother ?  
What did their friends, old women, relatives  
Take from the child in feeling, joy or pain ?

## DOMESDAY BOOK

What of her childhood friends, her days at school,  
Her teachers, girlhood sweethearts, lovers later,  
When she became a woman? What of these?  
And what of those who got effects because  
They knew this Elenor Murray?

Then she dies.

Read how the human secrets are exposed  
In many lives because she died — not all  
Lives, by her death affected, written here.  
The reader may trace out such other ruffles  
As come to him — this book must have an end.

Enough is shown to show what could be told  
If we should write a world of books. In brief  
One feature of the plot elaborates  
The closeness of one life, however humble  
With every life upon this globe. In truth  
I sit here in Chicago, housed and fed,  
And think the world secure, at peace, the clock  
Just striking three, in Europe striking eight:  
And in some province, in some palace, hut,  
Some words are spoken, or a fisticuff  
Results between two brawlers, and for that  
A blue-eyed boy, my grandson, we may say,  
Not even yet in seed, but to be born  
A half a century hence, is by those words,  
That fisticuff, drawn into war in Europe,  
Shrieks from a bullet through the groin, and lies  
Under the sod of France.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

But to return  
To Elenor Murray, I have made a book  
Called Domesday Book, a census spiritual  
Taken of our America, or in part  
Taken, not wholly taken, it may be.  
For William Merival, the coroner,  
Who probed the death of Elenor Murray goes  
As far as may be, and beyond his power,  
In diagnosis of America,  
While finding out the cause of death. In short  
Becomes a William the Conqueror that way  
In making up a Domesday Book for us. . . .  
Of this a little later. But before  
We touch upon the Domesday book of old,  
We take up Elenor Murray, show her birth;  
Then skip all time between and show her death;  
Then take up Coroner Merival — who was he?  
Then trace the life of Elenor Murray through  
The witnesses at the inquest on the body  
Of Elenor Murray; — also letters written,  
And essays written, conversations heard,  
But all evoked by Elenor Murray's death.  
And by the way trace ruffles here and there. . . .  
A word now on the Domesday book of old:  
Remember not a book of doom, but a book  
Of houses; domus, house, so domus book.  
And this book of the death of Elenor Murray  
Is not a book of doom, though showing too  
How fate was woven round her, and the souls  
That touched her soul; but is a house book too

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Of riches, poverty, and weakness, strength  
Of this our country.

  If you take St. Luke  
You find an angel came to Mary, said:  
Hail! thou art highly favored, shalt conceive,  
Bring forth a son, a king for David's throne:—  
So tracing life before the life was born.  
We do the same for Elenor Murray, though  
No man or angel said to Elenor's mother:  
You have found favor, you are blessed of God,  
You shall conceive, bring forth a daughter blest,  
And blessing you. Quite otherwise the case,  
As being blest or blessing, something like  
Perhaps, in that desire, or flame of life,  
Which gifts new souls with passion, strength and love. . . . .  
This is the manner of the girl's conception,  
And of her birth:— . . .

---

### THE BIRTH OF ELENOR MURRAY

  What are the mortal facts  
With which we deal? The man is thirty years,  
Most vital, in a richness physical,  
Of musical heart and feeling; and the woman  
Is twenty-eight, a cradle warm and rich  
For life to grow in.

  And the time is this:  
This Henry Murray has a mood of peace,

## THE BIRTH OF ELENOR MURRAY

A splendor as of June, has for the time  
Quelled anarchy within him, come to law,  
Sees life a thing of beauty, happiness,  
And fortune glow before him. And the mother,  
Sunning her feathers in his genial light,  
Takes longing and has hope. For body's season  
The blood of youth leaps in them like a fountain,  
And splashes musically in the crystal pool  
Of quiet days and hours. They rise refreshed,  
Feel all the sun's strength flow through muscles, nerves;  
Extract from food no poison, only health;  
Are sensitive to simple things, the turn  
Of leaves on trees, flowers springing, robins' songs.

Now such a time must prosper love's desire,  
Fed gently, tended wisely, left to mount  
In flame and light. A prospering fate occurs  
To send this Henry Murray from his wife,  
And keep him absent for a month — inspire  
A daily letter, written of the joys,  
And hopes they have together, and omit,  
Forgotten for the time, old aches, despairs,  
Forebodings for the future.

What results?

For thirty days her youth, and youthful blood  
Under the stimulus of absence, letters,  
And growing longing, laves and soothes and feeds,  
Like streams that nourish fields, her body's being.  
Enriches cells to plumpness, dim, asleep,  
Which stretch, expand and turn, the prototype

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Of a baby newly born; which after the cry  
At midnight, taking breath an hour before,—  
That cry which is of things most tragical,  
The tragedy most poignant — sleeps and rests,  
And flicks its little fingers, with closed eyes  
Senses with visions of unopened leaves  
This monstrous and external sphere, the world,  
And what moves in it.

So she thinks of him,  
And longs for his return, and as she longs  
The rivers of her body run and ripple,  
Refresh and quicken her. The morning's light  
Flutters upon the ceiling, and she lies  
And stretches drowsily in the breaking slumber  
Of fluctuant emotion, calls to him  
With spirit and flesh, until his very name  
Seems like to form in sound, while lips are closed,  
And tongue is motionless, beyond herself,  
And in the middle spaces of the room  
Calls back to her.

And Henry Murray caught,  
In letters, which she sent him, all she felt,  
Re-kindled it and sped it back to her.  
Then came a lover's fancy in his brain:  
He would return unlooked for — who, the god,  
Inspired the fancy? — find her in what mood  
She might be in his absence, where no blur  
Of expectation of his coming changed  
Her color, flame of spirit. And he bought

## THE BIRTH OF ELENOR MURRAY

Some chablis and a cake, slipped noiselessly  
Into the chamber where she lay asleep,  
And had a light upon her face before  
She woke and saw him.

How she cried her joy!  
And put her arms around him, burned away  
In one great moment from a goblet of fire,  
Which over-flowed, whatever she had felt  
Of shrinking or distaste, or loveless hands  
At any time before, and burned it there  
Till even the ashes sparkled, blew away  
In incense and in light.

She rose and slipped  
A robe on and her slippers; drew a stand  
Between them for the chablis and the cake.  
And drank and ate with him, and showed her teeth,  
While laughing, shaking curls, and flinging back  
Her head for rapture, and in little crows.

And thus the wine caught up the resting cells,  
And flung them in the current, and their blood  
Flows silently and swiftly, running deep;  
And their two hearts beat like the rhythmic chimes  
Of little bells of steel made blue by flame,  
Because their lives are ready now, and life  
Cries out to life for life to be. The fire,  
Lit in the altar of their eyes, is blind  
For mysteries that urge, the blood of them  
In separate streams would mingle, hurried on

## DOMESDAY BOOK

By energy from the heights of ancient mountains;  
The God himself, and Life, the Gift of God.

And as result the hurrying microcosms  
Out of their beings sweep, seek out, embrace,  
Dance for the rapture of freedom, being loosed;  
Unite, achieve their destiny, find the cradle  
Of sleep and growth, take up the cryptic task  
Of maturation and of fashioning;  
Where no light is except the light of God  
To light the human spirit, which emerges  
From nothing that man knows; and where a face,  
To be a woman's or a man's takes form:  
Hands that shall gladden, lips that shall enthrall  
With songs or kisses, hands and lips, perhaps,  
To hurt and poison. All is with the fates,  
And all beyond us.

Now the seed is sown,  
The flower must grow and blossom. Something comes,  
Perhaps, to whisper something in the ear  
That will exert itself against the mass  
That grows, proliferates; but for the rest  
The task is done. One thing remains alone:  
It is a daughter, woman, that you bear,  
A whisper says to her — It is her wish —  
Her wish materializes in a voice  
Which says: the name of Elenor is sweet,  
Choose that for her — Elenor, which is light,  
The light of Helen, but a lesser light



## FINDING OF THE BODY

In this our larger world ; a light to shine,  
And lure amid the tangled woodland ways  
Of this our life ; a firefly beating wings  
Here, there amid the thickets of hard days.  
And to go out at last, as all lights do,  
And leave a memory, perhaps, but leave  
No meaning to be known of any man. . . .  
So Elenor Murray is conceived and born.

---

But now this Elenor Murray being born,  
We start not with her life, but with her death,  
The finding of her body by the river.  
And then as Coroner Merival takes proof  
Her life comes forth, until the Coroner  
Traces it to the moment of her death.  
And thus both life and death of her are known.  
This the beginning of the mystery: —

---

## FINDING OF THE BODY

Elenor Murray, daughter of Henry Murray,  
The druggist at LeRoy, a village near  
The shadow of Starved Rock, this Elenor  
But recently returned from France, a heart  
Who gave her service in the world at war,  
Was found along the river's shore, a mile  
Above Starved Rock, on August 7th, the day  
Year 1679, LaSalle set sail

## DOMESDAY BOOK

For Michilmackinac to reach Green Bay  
In the *Griffin*, in the winter snow and sleet,  
Reaching "Lone Cliff," Starved Rock its later name,  
Also La Vantum, village of the tribe  
Called Illini.

This may be taken to speak  
The symbol of her life and fate. For first  
This Elenor Murray comes into this life,  
And lives her youth where the Rock's shadow falls,  
As if to say her life should starve and lie  
Beneath a shadow, wandering in the world,  
As Cavalier LaSalle did, born at Rouen,  
Shot down on Trinity River, Texas. She  
Searches for life and conquest of herself  
With the same sleepless spirit of LaSalle;  
And comes back to the shadow of the Rock,  
And dies beneath its shadow. Cause of death?  
Was she like Sieur LaSalle shot down, or choked,  
Struck, poisoned? Let the coroner decide.  
Who, hearing of the matter, takes the body  
And brings it to LeRoy, is taking proofs;  
Lets doctors cut the body, probe and peer  
To find the cause of death.

And so this morning  
Of August 7th, as a hunter walks —  
Looking for rabbits maybe, aimless hunting —  
Over the meadow where the Illini's  
La Vantum stood two hundred years before,

## FINDING OF THE BODY

Gun over arm in readiness for game,  
Sees some two hundred paces to the south  
Bright colors, red and blue; thinks off the bat  
A human body lies there, hurries on  
And finds the girl's dead body, hatless head,  
The hat some paces off, as if she fell  
In such way that the hat dashed off. Her arms  
Lying outstretched, the body half on side,  
The face upturned to heaven, open eyes  
That might have seen Starved Rock until the eyes  
Sank down in darkness where no image comes.

This hunter knew the body, bent and looked;  
Gave forth a gasp of horror, leaned and touched  
The cold hand of the dead: saw in her pocket,  
Sticking above the pocket's edge a banner,  
And took it forth, saw it was Joan of Arc  
In helmet and cuirass, kneeling in prayer.  
And in the banner a paper with these words:  
"To be brave, and not to flinch." And standing there  
This hunter knew that Elenor Murray came  
Some days before from France, was visiting  
An aunt, named Irma Leese beyond LeRoy.  
What was she doing by the river's shore?  
He saw no mark upon her, and no blood;  
No pistol by her, nothing disarranged  
Of hair or clothing, showing struggle — nothing  
To indicate the death she met. Who saw her  
Before or when she died? How long had death  
Been on her eyes? Some hours, or over-night.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The hunter touched her hand, already stiff;  
And saw the dew upon her hair and brow,  
And a blue deadness in her eyes, like pebbles.  
The lips were black, and bottle flies had come  
To feed upon her tongue. 'Tis ten o'clock,  
The coolness of the August night unchanged  
By this spent sun of August. And the moon  
Lies dead and wasted there beyond Starved Rock.  
The moon was beautiful last night! To walk  
Beside the river under the August moon  
Took Elenor Murray's fancy, as he thinks.  
Then thinking of the aunt of Elenor Murray,  
Who should be notified, the hunter runs  
To tell the aunt — but there's the coroner —  
Is there not law the coroner should know?  
Should not the body lie, as it was found,  
Until the coroner takes charge of it?  
Should not he stand on guard? And so he runs,  
And from a farmer's house by telephone  
Sends word to Coroner Merival. Then returns  
And guards the body.

Here is riddle first:

The coroner sat with his traveling bags,  
Was closing up his desk, had planned a trip  
With boon companions, they were with him there;  
The auto waited at the door to take them  
To catch the train for northern Michigan.  
He closed the desk and they arose to go.  
Just then the telephone began to ring,

## THE CORONER

The hunter at the other end was talking,  
And told of Elenor Murray. Merival  
Turned to his friends and said: "The jig is up.  
Here is an inquest, and of moment too.  
I cannot go, but you jump in the car,  
And go — you'll catch the train if you speed up."  
They begged him to permit his deputy  
To hold the inquest. Merival said "no,"  
And waived them off. They left. He got a car  
And hurried to the place where Eleanor lay. . . .  
Now who was Merival the Coroner?  
For we shall know of Elenor through him,  
And know her better, knowing Merival.

---

## THE CORONER

Merival, of a mother fair and good,  
A father sound in body and in mind,  
Rich through three thousand acres left to him  
By that same father dying, mother dead  
These many years, a bachelor, lived alone  
In the rambling house his father built of stone  
Cut from the quarry near at hand, above  
The river's bend, before it meets the island  
Where Starved Rock rises.

Here he had returned,  
After his Harvard days, took up the task  
Of these three thousand acres, while his father

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Aging, relaxed his hand. From farm to farm  
Rode daily, kept the books, bred cattle, sheep,  
Raised seed corn, tried the secrets of DeVries,  
And Burbank in plant breeding.

Day by day,  
His duties ended, he sat at a window  
In a great room of books where lofty shelves  
Were packed with cracking covers; newer books  
Flowed over on the tables, round the globes  
And statuettes of bronze. Upon the wall  
The portraits hung of father and of mother,  
And two moose heads above the mantel stared,  
The trophies of a hunt in youth.

So Merival  
At a bay window sat in the great room,  
Felt and beheld the stream of life and thought  
Flow round and through him, to a sound in key  
With his own consciousness, the murmurous voice  
Of his own soul.

Along a lawn that sloped  
Some hundred feet to the river he would muse.  
Or through the oaks and elms and silver birches  
Between the plots of flowers and rows of box  
Look at the distant scene of hilly woodlands.  
And why no woman in his life, no face  
Smiling from out the summer house of roses,  
Such riotous flames against the distant green?

## THE CORONER

And why no sons and daughters, strong and fair,  
To use these horses, ponies, tramp the fields,  
Shout from the tennis court, swim, skate and row?  
He asked himself the question many times,  
And gave himself the answer. It was this:

At twenty-five a woman crossed his path —  
Let's have the story as the world believes it,  
Then have the truth. She was betrothed to him,  
But went to France to study, died in France.  
And so he mourned her, kept her face enshrined,  
Was wedded to her spirit, could not brook  
The coming of another face to blur  
This face of faces! So the story went  
Around the country. But his grief was not  
The grief they told. The pang that gnawed his heart,  
And took his spirit, dulled his man's desire  
Took root in shame, defeat, rejected love.  
He had gone east to meet her and to wed her,  
Now turned his thirtieth year; when he arrived  
He found his dear bride flown, a note for him,  
Left with the mother, saying she had flown,  
And could not marry him, it would not do,  
She did not love him as a woman should  
Who makes a pact for life; her heart was set  
For now upon her music, she was off  
To France for study, wished him well, in truth —  
Some woman waited him who was his mate. . . .  
So Merival read over many times  
The letter, tried to find a secret hope

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Lodged back of words — was this a woman's way  
To lure him further, win him to more depths?  
He half resolved to follow her to France;  
Then as he thought of what he was himself  
In riches, breeding, place, and manliness  
His egotism rose, fed by the hurt:  
She might stay on in France for aught he cared!  
What was she, anyway, that she could lose  
Such happiness and love? for he had given  
In a great passion out of a passionate heart  
All that was in him — who was she to spurn  
A gift like this? Yet always in his heart  
Stirred something which by him was love and hate.  
And when the word came she had died, the word  
She loved a maestro, and the word like gas,  
Which poisons, creeps and is not known, that death  
Came to her somehow through a lawless love,  
Or broken love, disaster of some sort,  
His spirit withered with its bitterness.  
And in the years to come he feared to give  
With unreserve his heart, his leaves withheld  
From possible frost, dreamed on and drifted on  
Afraid to venture, having scarcely strength  
To seek and try, endure defeat again.

Thus was his youth unsatisfied, and as hope  
Of something yet to be to fill his hope  
Died not, but with each dawn awoke to move  
Its wings, his youth continued past his years.  
The very cry of youth, which would not cease



## THE CORONER

Kept all the dreams and passions of his youth  
Wakeful, expectant — kept his face and frame  
Rosy and agile as he neared the mark  
Of fifty years.

But every day he sat  
As one who waited. What would come to him?  
What soul would seek him in this room of books?  
But yet no soul he found when he went forth,  
Breaking his solitude, to towns.

What waste  
Thought Merival, of spirit, but what waste  
Of spirit in the lives he knew! What homes  
Where children starve for bread, or starve for love,  
Half satisfied, half-schooled are driven forth  
With aspirations broken, or with hopes  
Or talents bent or blasted! O, what wives  
Drag through the cheerless days, what marriages  
Cling and exhaust to death, and warp and stain  
The children! If a business, like this farm,  
Were run on like economy, a year  
Would see its ruin! But he thought, at last,  
Of spiritual economy, so to save  
The lives of men and women, use their powers  
To ends that suit.

And thus when on a time  
A miner lost his life there at LeRoy,  
And when the inquest found the man was killed

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Through carelessness of self, while full of drink,  
Merival, knowing that the drink was caused  
By hopeless toil and by a bitter grief  
Touching a daughter, who had strayed and died,  
First wondered if in cases like to this  
Good might result, if there was brought to light  
All secret things; and in the course of time,  
If many deaths were probed, a store of truth  
Might not be gathered which some genius hand  
Could use to work out laws, instructions, systems  
For saving and for using wasting spirits,  
So wasted in the chaos, in the senseless  
Turmoil and madness of this reckless life,  
Which treats the spirit as the cheapest thing,  
Since it is so abundant.

Thoughts like these  
Led Merival to run for coroner.  
The people wondered why he sought the office.  
But when they gave it to him, and he used  
His private purse to seek for secret faults,  
In lives grown insupportable, for causes  
Which prompted suicide, the people wondered,  
The people murmured sometimes, and his foes  
Mocked or traduced his purpose.

Merival

The coroner is now two years in office  
When Henry Murray's daughter Elenor  
Found by the river, gives him work to do

## THE CORONER

In searching out her life's fate, cause of death,  
How, in what manner, and by whom or what  
Said Elenor's dead body came to death;  
And of all things which might concern the same,  
With all the circumstances pertinent,  
Material or in anywise related,  
Or anywise connected with said death.  
And as in other cases Merival  
Construed the words of law, as written above:  
All circumstances material or related,  
Or anywise connected with said death,  
To give him power as coroner to probe  
To ultimate secrets, causes intimate  
In birth, environment, crises of the soul,  
Grief, disappointment, hopes deferred or ruined.  
So now he exercised his power to strip  
This woman's life of vestments, to lay bare  
Her soul, though other souls should run and rave  
For nakedness and shame.

So Merival  
Returning from the river with the body  
Of Elenor Murray thought about the woman;  
Recalled her school days in LeRoy — the night  
When she was graduated at the High School; thought  
About her father, mother, girlhood friends;  
And stories of her youth came back to him.  
The whispers of her leaving home, the trips  
She took, her father's loveless ways. And wonder  
For what she did and made of self, possessed

## DOMESDAY BOOK

His thinking; and the fancy grew in him  
No chance for like appraisal had been his  
Of human worth and waste, this man who knew  
Both life and books. And lately he had read  
The history of King William and his book.  
And even the night before this Elenor's body  
Was found beside the river — this he read,  
Perhaps, he thought, was reading it when Elenor  
Was struck down or was choked. How strange the hour  
Whose separate place finds Merival with a book,  
And Elenor with death, brings them together,  
And for result blends book and death! . . . He knew  
By Domesday Book King William had a record  
Of all the crown's possessions, had the names  
Of all land-holders, had the means of knowing  
The kingdom's strength for war; it gave the data  
How to increase the kingdom's revenue.  
It was a record in a case of titles,  
Disputed or at issue to appeal to.  
So Merival could say: My inquests show  
The country's wealth or poverty in souls,  
And what the country's strength is, who by right  
May claim his share-ship in the country's life;  
How to increase the country's glory, power.  
Why not a Domesday Book in which are shown  
A certain country's tenures spiritual?  
And if great William held great council once  
To make inquiry of the nation's wealth,  
Shall not I as a coroner in America,  
Inquiring of a woman's death, make record

## THE CORONER

Of lives which have touched hers, what lives she touched;  
And how her death by surest logic touched  
This life or that, was cause of causes, proved  
The event that made events?

So Merival

Brought in a jury for the inquest work  
As follows: Winthrop Marion, learned and mellow,  
A journalist in Chicago, keeping still  
His residence at LeRoy. And David Borrow,  
A sunny pessimist of varied life,  
Ingenious thought, a lawyer widely read.  
And Samuel Ritter, owner of the bank,  
A classmate of the coroner at Harvard.  
Llewellyn George, but lately come from China,  
A traveler, intellectual, anti-social  
Searcher for life and beauty, devotee  
Of such diversities as Nietzsche, Plato.  
Also a Reverend Maiworm noted for  
Charitable deeds and dreams. And Isaac Newfeldt  
Who in his youth had studied Adam Smith,  
And since had studied tariffs, lands and money,  
Economies of nations.

And because

They were the friends of Merival, and admired  
His life and work, they dropped their several tasks  
To serve as jurymen.

The hunter came

And told his story: how he found the body,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

What hour it was, and how the body lay;  
About the banner in the woman's pocket,  
Which Coroner Merival had taken, seen,  
And wondered over. For if Elenor  
Was not a Joan too, why treasure this?  
Did she take Joan's spirit for her guide?  
And write these words: "To be brave and not to flinch"?  
She wrote them; for her father said: "It's true  
That is her writing," when he saw the girl  
First brought to Merival's office.

### Merival

Amid this business gets a telegram:  
Tom Norman drowned, one of the men with whom  
He planned this trip to Michigan. Later word  
Tom Norman and the other, Wilbur Horne  
Are in a motor-boat. Tom rises up  
To get the can of bait and pitches out,  
His friend leaps out to help him. But the boat  
Goes on, the engine going, there they fight  
For life amid the waves. Tom has been hurt,  
Somehow in falling, cannot save himself,  
And tells his friend to leave him, swim away.  
His friend is forced at last to swim away,  
And makes the mile to shore by hardest work.  
Tom Norman, dead, leaves wife and children caught  
In business tangles which he left to build  
New strength, to disentangle, on the trip.  
The rumor goes that Tom was full of drink,  
Thus lost his life. But if our Elenor Murray

## HENRY MURRAY

Had not been found beside the river, what  
Had happened? If the coroner had been there,  
And run the engine, steered the boat beside  
The drowning man, and Wilbur Horne — what drink  
Had caused the death of Norman? Or again,  
Perhaps the death of Elenor saved the life  
Of Merival, by keeping him at home  
And safe from boats and waters.

Anyway,

As Elenor Murray's body has no marks,  
And shows no cause of death, the coroner  
Sends out for Dr. Trace and talks to him  
Of things that end us, says to Dr. Trace  
Perform the autopsy on Elenor Murray.  
And while the autopsy was being made  
By Dr. Trace, he calls the witnesses  
The father first of Elenor Murray, who  
Tells Merival this story:

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## HENRY MURRAY

Henry Murray, father of Elenor Murray,  
Willing to tell the coroner Merival  
All things about himself, about his wife,  
All things as well about his daughter, touching  
Her growth, and home life, if the coroner  
Would hear him privately, save on such things

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Strictly relating to the inquest, went  
To Coroner Merival's office and thus spoke:  
I was born here some sixty years ago,  
Was nurtured in these common schools, too poor  
To satisfy a longing for a college.  
Felt myself gifted with some gifts of mind,  
Some fineness of perception, thought, began  
By twenty years to gather books and read  
Some history, philosophy and science.  
Had vague ambitions, analyzed perhaps,  
To learn, be wise.

Now if you study me,  
Look at my face, you'll see some trace of her:  
My brow is hers, my mouth is hers, my eyes  
Of lighter color are yet hers, this way  
I have of laughing, as I saw inside  
The matter deeper cause for laughter, hers.  
And my jaw hers betokening a will,  
Hers too, with chin that mitigates the will,  
Shading to softness as hers did.

Our minds  
Had something too in common: first this will  
Which tempted fate to bend it, break it too —  
I know not why in her case or in mine.  
But when my will is bent I grow morose,  
And when it's broken, I become a scourge  
To all around me. Yes, I've visited  
A life-time's wrath upon my wife. This daughter



## HENRY MURRAY

When finding will subdued did not give up,  
But took the will for something else — went on  
By ways more prosperous; but alas! poor me!  
I hold on when defeated, and lie down  
When I am beaten, growling, ruminating  
Upon my failure, think of nothing else.  
But truth to tell, while we two were opposed,  
This daughter and myself, while temperaments  
Kept us at sword's points, while I saw in her  
Traits of myself I liked not, also traits  
Of the child's mother which I loathe, because  
They have undone me, helped at least — no less  
I see this child as better than myself,  
And better than her mother, so admire.  
Also I never trusted her; as a child  
She would rush in relating lying wonders;  
She feigned emotions, purposes and moods;  
She was a little actress from the first,  
And all her high resolves from first to last  
Seemed but a robe with flowing sleeves in which  
Her hands could hide some theft, some secret spoil.  
When she was fourteen I could see in her  
The passionate nature of her mother — well  
You know a father's feelings when he sees  
His daughter sensed by youths and lusty men  
As one of the kind for capture. It's a theme  
A father cannot talk of with his daughter.  
He may say, "have a care," or "I forbid  
Your strolling, riding with these boys at night."  
But if the daughter stands and eyes the father,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

As she did me with flaming eyes, then goes  
Her way in secret, lies about her ways,  
The father can but wonder, watch or brood,  
Or switch her maybe, for I switched her once,  
And found it did no good. I needed here  
The mother's aid, but no, her mother saw  
Herself in the girl, and said she knew the girl,  
That I was too suspicious, out of touch  
With a young girl's life, desire for happiness.  
But when this Alma Bell affair came up,  
And the school principal took pains to say  
My daughter was too reckless of her name  
In strolling and in riding, then my wife  
Howled at me like a tigress: whip that man!  
And as my daughter cried, and my wife screeched,  
And called me coward if I let him go,  
I rushed out to the street and finding him  
Beat up his face, though almost dropping dead  
From my exertion. Well, the aftermath  
Was worse for me, not only by the talk,  
But in my mind who saw no gratitude  
In daughter or in mother for my deed.  
The daughter from that day took up a course  
More secret from my eyes, more variant  
From any wish I had. We stood apart,  
And grew apart thereafter. And from that day  
My wife grew worse in temper, worse in nerves.  
And though the people say she is my slave,  
That I alone, of all who live, have conquered  
Her spirit, still what despotism works

## HENRY MURRAY

Free of reprisals, or of breakings-forth  
When hands are here, not there?

But to return:

One takes up something for a livelihood,  
And dreams he'll leave it later, when in time  
His plans mature; and as he earns and lives,  
With some time for his plans, hopes for the day  
When he may step forth from his olden life  
Into a new life made thus gradually,  
I hoped to be a lawyer; but to live  
I started as a drug clerk — look to-day  
I own that little drug store — here I am  
With drugs my years through, drugged myself at last.  
And as a clerk I met my wife — went mad  
About her, and I see in Elenor  
Her mother's gift for making fools of men.  
Why, I can scarce explain it, it's the flesh,  
But then it's spirit too. Such flaming up  
As came from flames like ours, but more of hers  
Burned in the children. Yes, it might be well  
For theorists in heredity to think  
About the matter.

Well, but how about  
The flames that make the children? For this woman  
Too surely ruined me and sapped my life.  
You hear much of the vampire, but what wife  
Has not more chance for eating up a man?  
She has him daily, has him fast for years.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

A man can shake a vampire off, but how  
To shake a wife off, when the children come,  
And you must leave your place, your livelihood  
To shake her off? And if you shake her off  
Where do you go? what do you do? and how?  
You see 'twas love that caught me, yet even so  
I had resisted love had I not seen  
A chance to rise through marriage. It was this:  
You know, of course, my wife was Elenor Fouche,  
Daughter of Arthur, thought to be so rich.  
And I had hopes to patch my fortunes up  
In this alliance, and become a lawyer.  
What happened? Why they helped me not at all.  
The children came, and I was chained to work,  
To clothe and feed a family — all the while  
My soul combusted with this aspiration,  
And my good nature went to ashes, dampened  
By secret tears which filtered through as lye.  
Then finally, when my wife's father died,  
After our marriage, twenty years or so,  
His fortune came to nothing, all she got  
Went to that little house we live in here —  
It needs paint now, the porch has rotten boards —  
And I was forced to see these children learn  
What public schools could teach, and even as I  
Left school half taught, and never went to college,  
So did these children, saving Elenor,  
Who saw two years of college — earned herself  
By teaching. I choke up, just wait a minute!  
What depths of calmness may a man come to

## HENRY MURRAY

As father, who can think of this and be  
Quiet about his heart? His heart will hurt,  
Move, as it were, as a worm does with its pain.  
And these days now, when trembling hands and head  
Foretell decline, or worse, and make me think  
As face to face with God, most earnestly,  
Most eager for the truth, I wonder much  
If I misjudged this daughter, canvass her  
Myself to see if I had power to do  
A better part by her. That is the way  
This daughter has got in my soul. At first  
She incubates in me as force unknown,  
A spirit strange yet kindred, in my life;  
And we are hostile and yet drawn together;  
But when we're drawn together see and feel  
These oppositions. Next she's in my life —  
The second stage of the fever — as dislike,  
Repugnance, and I wish her out of sight,  
Out of my life. Then comes these ugly things,  
Like Alma Bell, and rumors from away  
Where she is teaching, and I put her out  
Of life and thought the more, and wonder why  
I fathered such a nature, whence it came.  
Well, then the fever goes and I am weak,  
Repentant it may be, delirious visions  
That haunted me in fever plague me yet,  
Even while I think them visions, nothing else.  
So I grow pitiful and blame myself  
For any part I had in her mistakes,  
Sorrows and struggles, and I curse myself

## DOMESDAY BOOK

That I was powerless to help her more —  
Thus is she like a fever in my life.

Well, then the child grows up. But as a child  
She dances, laughs and sings. At three years springs  
For minutes and for minutes on her toes,  
Like skipping rope, clapping her hands the while,  
Her blue eyes twinkling, and her milk-white teeth  
Glistening as she gurgled, shouted, laughed —  
There never was such vital strength. I give  
The pictures as my memory took them. Next  
I see her looking side-ways at me, as if  
She studied me, avoided me. The child  
Is now ten years of age; and now I know  
She smelled the rats that made the family hearth  
A place for scampering; the horrors of our home.  
She thought I brought the rats and kept them there,  
These rats of bickering, anger, strife at home.  
I knew she blamed me for her mother's moods  
Who dragged about the kitchen day by day,  
Sad faced and silent. So the upshot was  
I had two enemies in the house, where once  
I had but one, her mother. This made worse  
The state for both, and worse the state for me.  
And so it goes. Then next there's Alma Bell.  
The following year my daughter finished up  
The High School — and we sit — my wife and I  
To see the exercises. And that summer Elenor,  
Now eighteen and a woman, goes about —  
I don't know what she does, sometimes I see

## HENRY MURRAY

Some young man with her walking. But at home,  
When I come in, the mother and the daughter  
Put pedals on their talk, or change the theme —  
I am shut out.

And in the fall I learn  
From some outsider that she's teaching school,  
And later people laugh and talk to me  
About her feat of cowing certain Czechs,  
Who broke her discipline in school.

Well, then

Two years go on that have no memory,  
Just like sick days in bed when you lie there  
And wake and sleep and wait. But finally  
Her mother says: "To-night our Elenor  
Leaves for Los Angeles." And then the mother,  
To hide a sob, coughs nervously and leaves  
The room where I am, for the kitchen — I  
Sit with the evening paper, let it fall,  
Then hold it up to read again and try  
To say to self, "All right, what if she goes?"  
The evening meal goes hard, for Elenor  
Shines forth in kindness for me, talks and laughs —  
I choke again. . . . She says to me if God  
Had meant her for a better youth, then God  
Had given her a better youth; she thanks me  
For making High School possible to her,  
And says all will be well — she will earn money  
To go to college, that she will gain strength

## DOMESDAY BOOK

By helping self — Just think, my friend, to hear  
Such words, which in their kindness proved my failure,  
When I had hoped, aspired, when I had given  
My very soul, whether I liked this daughter,  
Or liked her not, out of a generous hand,  
Large hearted in its carelessness to give  
A daughter of such mind a place in life,  
And schooling for the place.

The meal was over.

We stood there silent; then her face grew wet  
With tears, as wet as blossoms soaked with rain.  
She took my hand and took her mother's hand,  
And put our hands together — then she said:  
“ Be friends, be friends,” and hurried from the room,  
Her mother following. I stepped out-doors,  
And stood what seemed a minute, entered again,  
Walked to the front room, from the window saw  
Elenor and her mother in the street.  
The girl was gone! How could I follow them?  
They had not asked me. So I stood and saw  
The canvas telescope her mother carried.  
They disappeared. I went back to my store,  
Came back at nine o'clock, lighted a match  
And saw my wife in bed, cloths on her eyes.  
She turned her face to the wall, and didn't speak.

Next morning at the breakfast table she,  
Complaining of a stiff arm, said: “ that satchel  
Was weighted down with books, my arm is stiff —



HENRY MURRAY

Elenor took French books to study French.  
When she can pay a teacher, she will learn  
How to pronounce the words, but by herself  
She'll learn the grammar, how to read." She knew  
How words like that would hurt!

I merely said:  
" A happy home is better than knowing French,"  
And went off to my store.

But coroner,  
Search for the men in her life. When she came  
Back from the West after three years, I knew  
By look of her eyes that some one filled her life,  
Had taken her life and body. What if I  
Had failed as father in the way I failed?  
And what if our home was not home to her?  
She could have married — why not? If a girl  
Can fascinate the men — I know she could —  
She can have marriage, if she wants to marry.  
Unless she runs to men already married,  
And if she does so, don't you make her out  
As loose and bad?

Well, what is more to tell?  
She learned French, seemed to know the ways of the  
world,  
Knew books, knew how to dress, gave evidence  
Of contact with refinements; letters came  
When she was here at intervals inscribed

## DOMESDAY BOOK

In writing of elite ones, gifted maybe.  
And she was filial and kind to me,  
Most kind toward her mother, gave us things  
At Christmas time. But still her way was such  
That I as well had been familiar with her  
As with some formal lady visiting.  
She came back here before she went to France,  
Staid two days with us. Once upon the porch  
She turned to me and said: "I wish to honor  
Mother and you by serving in the war.  
You must rejoice that I can serve — you must!  
But most I wish to honor America,  
This land of promise, of fulfillment, too,  
Which proves to all the world that men and women  
Are born alike of God, at least that riches  
And classes formed in pride have neither hearts,  
Nor minds above the souls of those who work.  
This land that reared me is my dearest love,  
I go to serve the country."

Pardon me!

A man of my age in an hour like this  
Must cry a little — wait till I can say  
The last words that she said to me.

She put

Her arms about me, then she said to me:  
"I am so glad my life and place in life  
Were such that I was forced to rise or sink,  
To strive or fail. God has been good to me,

## HENRY MURRAY

Who gifted me with spirit to aspire.”  
I go back to my store now. In these days,  
Last days, of course, I try to be a husband,  
Try to be kinder to the mother of Elenor.  
Death is not far off, and that makes us think.  
We may be over soft or penitent;  
Forgive where we should hate still, being soft;  
And fade off from the wrongs, we brooded on;  
And cease to care life has been badly lived,  
From first to last. But none the less our vision  
Seems clearer as we end this trivial life.  
And so I try to be a kinder husband  
To Elenor’s mother.

So spoke Henry Murray  
To Merival; a stenographer took down  
His words, and they were written out and shown  
The jury. Afterward the mother came  
And told her story to the coroner,  
Also reported, written out, and shown  
The jury. But it happened thus with her:  
She waited in the coroner’s outer room  
Until her husband told his story, then  
With eyes upon the floor, passing her husband,  
The two in silence passing, as he left  
The coroner’s office, spoke amid her sighs,  
Her breath long drawn at intervals, looking down  
The while she spoke:

## DOMESDAY BOOK

MRS. MURRAY

I think, she said at first,  
My daughter did not kill herself. I'm sure  
Someone did violence to her, your tests,  
Examination will prove violence.  
It would be like her fate to meet with such:  
Poor child, unfortunate from birth, at least  
Unfortunate in fortune, peace and joy.  
Or else if she met with no violence,  
Some sudden crisis of her woman's heart  
Came on her by the river, the result  
Of strains and labors in the war in France.  
I'll tell you why I say this: First I knew  
She had come near me from New York, there came  
A letter from her, saying she had come  
To visit with her aunt there near LeRoy,  
And rest and get the country air. She said  
To keep it secret, not to tell her father;  
That she was in no frame of mind to come  
And be with us, and see her father, see  
Our life, which is the same as it was when  
She was a child and after. But she said  
To come to her. And so the day before  
They found her by the river I went over  
And saw her for the day. She seemed most gay,  
Gave me the presents which she brought from France,  
Told me of many things, but rather more  
By way of half told things than something told

## MRS. MURRAY

Continuously, you know. She had grown fairer,  
She had a majesty of countenance,  
A luminous glory shone about her face,  
Her voice was softer, eyes looked tenderer.  
She held my hands so lovingly when we met.  
She kissed me with such silent, speaking love.  
But then she laughed and told me funny stories.  
She seemed all hope, and said she'd rest awhile  
Before she made a plan for life again.  
And when we parted, she said: "Mother, think  
What trip you'd like to take. I've saved some money,  
And you must have a trip, a rest, construct  
Yourself anew for life." So, as I said,  
She came to death by violence, or else  
She had some weakness that she hid from me  
Which came upon her quickly.

For the rest,  
Suppose I told you all my life, and told  
What was my waste in life and what in hers,  
How I have lived, and how poor Elenor  
Was raised or half-raised — what's the good of that?  
Are not there rooms of books, of tales and poems  
And histories to show all secrets of life?  
Does anyone live now, or learn a thing  
Not lived and learned a thousand times before?  
The trouble is these secrets are locked up  
In books and might as well be locked in graves,  
Since they mean nothing till you live yourself.  
And I suppose the race will live and suffer

## DOMESDAY BOOK

As long as leaves put forth in spring, live over  
The very sorrows, horrors that we live.  
Wisdom is here, but how to learn that wisdom,  
And use it while life's worth the living, that's  
The thing to be desired. But let it go.  
If any soul can profit by my life,  
Or by my Elenor's, I trust he may,  
And help him to it.

Coroner Merival,  
Even the children in this neighborhood  
Know something of my husband and of me,  
Our struggle and unhappiness, even the children  
Hear Alma Bell's name mentioned with a look.  
And if you went about here to inquire  
About my Elenor, you'd find them saying  
She was a wonder girl, or this or that.  
But then you'd feel a closing up of speech,  
As if a door closed softly, just a way  
To indicate that something else was there,  
Somewhere in the person's room of thoughts.  
This is the truth, since I was told a man  
Came here to ask about her, when she asked  
To serve in France, the matter of Alma Bell  
Traced down and probed.

It being true, therefore,  
That you and all the rest know of my life,  
Our life at home, it matters nothing then  
That I go on and tell you what I think

## MRS. MURRAY

Made sorrow for us, what our waste was, tell you  
How the yarn knotted as we took the skein  
And wound it to 'a ball, and made the ball  
So hardly knotted that the yarn held fast  
Would not unwind for knitting.

Well, you know  
My father Arthur Fouche, my mother too.  
They reared me with the greatest care. You know  
They sent me to St. Mary's, where I learned  
Fine things, to be a lady — learned to dance,  
To play on the piano, sing a little;  
Learned French, Italian, learned to know good books,  
The beauty of a poem or a tale;  
Learned elegance of manners, how to walk,  
Stand, breathe, keep well, be radiant and strong,  
And so in all to make life beautiful,  
Become the helpful wife of some strong man,  
The mother of fine children. Well, at school  
We girls were guarded from the men, and so  
We went to town surrounded by our teachers,  
And only saw the boys when some girl's brother  
Came to the school to visit, perhaps a girl  
Consent had of her parents to receive  
A beau sometimes. But then I had no beau;  
And had I had my father would have kept him  
Away from me at school.

For truth to tell  
When I had finished school, came back to home

## DOMESDAY BOOK

They kept the men away, there was no man  
Quite good enough to call. Now here begins  
My fate, as you will see; their very care  
To make me what they wished, to have my life  
Grow safely, prosperously, was my undoing.  
I had a sister named Corinne who suffered  
Because of that; my father guarded me  
Against all strolling lovers, unknown men.  
But here was Henry Murray, whom they knew,  
And trusted too; and though they never dreamed  
I'd marry him, they trusted him to call.  
He seemed a quiet, diligent young man,  
Aspiring in the world. And so they thought  
They'd solve my loneliness and restless spirits  
By opening the door to him. My fate!  
They let him call upon me twice a month.  
He was in love with me before this started,  
That's why he tried to call. But as for me,  
He was a man, that's all, a being only  
In the world to talk to, help my loneliness.  
I had no love for him, no more than I  
Had love for father's tenant on the farm.  
And what I knew of marriage, what it means  
Was what a child knows. If you'll credit me  
I thought a man and woman slept together,  
Lay side by side, and somehow, I don't know,  
That children came.

But then I was so vital,  
Rebellious, hungering for freedom, that



## MRS. MURRAY

No chance was too indifferent to put by  
What offered freedom from the prison home,  
The watchfulness of father and of mother,  
The rigor of my discipline. And in truth  
No other man came by, no prospect showed  
Of going on a visit, finding life  
Some other place. And so it came about,  
After I knew this man two months, one night  
I made a rope of sheets, down from my window  
Descended to his arms, eloped in short,  
And married Henry Murray, and found out  
What marriage is, believe me. Well, I think  
The time will come when marriage will be known  
Before the parties tie themselves for life.  
How do you know a man, or know a woman  
Until the flesh instructs you? Do you know  
A man until you see him face to face?  
Or know what texture is his hand until  
You touch his hand? Well, lastly no one knows  
Whether a man is mate for you before  
You mate with him. I hope to see the day  
When men and women, to try out their souls  
Will live together, learning A. B. C.'s  
Of life before they write their fates for life.

Our story started then. To sate their rage  
My father and my mother cut me off,  
And so we had bread problems from the first.  
He made but little clerking in the store,  
Besides his mind was on the law and books.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

These were the early tangles of our yarn.  
And I grew worried as the children came,  
Two sons at first, and I was far from well,  
One died at five years, and I almost died  
For grief at this. But down below all things,  
Far down below all tune or scheme of sound,  
Where no rests were, but only ceaseless dirge,  
Was my heart's *de profundis*, crying out  
My thirst for love, not thirst for his, but thirst  
For love that quenched it. But the only water  
That passed my lips was desert water, poisoned  
By arsenic from his rocks. My soul grew bitter,  
Then sweetened under the cross, grew bitter again.  
My life lay raving on the desert sands.  
To speak more plainly, sleep deserted me.  
I could not sleep for thought, and for a will  
That could not bend, but hoped that death or something  
Would take him from me, bring me love before  
My face was withered, as it is to-day.  
At last the doctor found me growing mad  
For lack of sleep. Why was I so, he asked.  
You must give up this psychic work and quit  
This psychic writing, let the spirits go.  
Well, it was true that years before I found  
I heard and saw with higher power, received  
Deep messages from spirits, from my boy  
Who passed away. And as to this, who knows? —  
Surely no doctor — of this psychic power.  
You may be called neurotic, what is that?  
Perhaps it is the soul become so fine

MRS. MURRAY

It leaves the body, or shakes down the body  
With energy too subtle for the body.  
But I was sleepless for these years, at last  
The secret lost of sleep, for seven days  
And seven nights could find no sleep, until  
I lay upon the lawn and pushed my head,  
As a dog does around, around, around.  
There was a devil in me, at one with me,  
And neither to be put out, nor yet subdued  
By help outside, and nothing to be done  
Except to find escape by knife, or pistol,  
And thus get sleep. Escape! Oh, that's the word!  
There's something in the soul that says escape!  
Fly, fly from something, and in truth, my friend,  
Life's restlessness, however healthful it be,  
Is motivated by this urge to fly, escape:  
Well, to go on, they gave me everything,  
At last they gave me chloral, but no sleep!  
And finally I closed my eyes and quick  
The secret came to me, as one might find,  
After forgetting how, to swim, or walk,  
After a sickness, and for just two minutes  
I slept, and then I got the secret back,  
And later slept.

So I possessed myself.

But for these years sleep but two hours or so.  
Why do I wake? The spirits let me sleep.  
Oh, no it is my longing that will rest not,  
These thoughts of him that rest not, and this love  
That never has been satisfied, this heart

## DOMESDAY BOOK

So empty all these years; the bitterness  
Of living face to face with one you loathe,  
Yet pity, while you hate yourself for feeling  
Such bitterness toward another soul,  
As wretched as your own. But then as well  
I could not sleep for Elenor, for her fate,  
Never to have a chance in life. I saw  
Our poverty made surer; year by year  
Slip by with chances slipping.

Oh, that child!

When I first felt her lips that sucked my breasts  
My heart went muffled like a bird that tries  
To pour its whole song in one note and fails  
Out of its very ecstasy. A daughter,  
A little daughter at my breast, a soul  
Of a woman to be! I knew her spirit then,  
Felt all my love and longing in her lips,  
Felt all my passion, purity of desire  
In those sweet lips that sucked my breasts. Oh, rapture,  
Oh highest rapture God had given me  
To see her roll upon my arm and smile,  
Full fed, the milk that gurgled from her lips!  
Such blue eyes — oh, my child! My child! my child!  
I have no hope now of this life — no hope  
Except to take you to my breast again.  
God will be good and give you to me, or  
God will bring sleep to me, a sleep so still  
I shall not miss you, Elenor.

## MRS. MURRAY

I go on.

I see her when she first began to walk.  
She ran at first, just like a baby quail.  
She never walked. She danced into this life.  
She used to dance for minutes on her toes.  
My starved heart bore her vital in some way.  
My hope which would not die had made her gay,  
And unafraid and venturesome and hopeful.  
She did not know what sadness was, or fear,  
Or anything but laughter, play and fun.  
Not till she grew to ten years and could see  
The place in life that God had given her  
Between my life and his; and then I saw  
A thoughtfulness come over her, as a cloud  
Passes across the sun, and makes one place  
A shadow while the landscape lies in light:  
So quietness would come over her, with smiles  
Around her quietness and sunniest laughter  
Fast following on her quietness.

Well, you know

She went to school here as the others did.  
But who knew that I grieved to see her lose  
A schooling at St. Mary's, have no chance?  
No chance save what she earned herself? What girl  
Has earned the money for two years in college  
Beside my Elenor in this neighborhood?  
There is not one! But then if books and schooling  
Be things prerequisite for success in life,  
Why should we have a social scheme that clings

## DOMESDAY BOOK

To marriage and the home, when such a soul  
Is turned into the world from such a home,  
With schooling so inadequate? If the state  
May take our sons and daughters for its use  
In war, in peace, why let the state raise up  
And school these sons and daughters, let the home  
Go to full ruin from half ruin now,  
And let us who have failed in choosing mates  
Re-choose, without that fear of children's fate  
Which haunts us now.

For look at Elenor!

Why did she never marry? Any man  
Had made his life rich had he married her.  
But in this present scheme of things such women  
Move in a life where men are mostly less  
In mind and heart than they are — and the men  
Who are their equals never come to them,  
Or come to them too seldom, or if they come  
Are blind and do not know these Elenors.  
And she had character enough to live  
In single life, refuse the lesser chance,  
Since she found not the great one, as I think.  
But let it pass — I'm sure she was beloved,  
And more than once, I'm sure. But I am sure  
She was too wise for errors crude and common.  
And if she had a love that stopped her heart,  
She knew beforehand all, and met her fate  
Bravely, and wrote that "To be brave and not  
To flinch," to keep before her soul her faith

## MRS. MURRAY

Deep down within it, lest she might forget it  
Among her crowded thoughts.

She went to the war.

She came to see me before she went, and said  
She owed her courage and her restless spirit  
To me, her will to live, her love of life,  
Her power to sacrifice and serve, to me.  
She put her arms about my neck and kissed me,  
Said I had been a mother to her, being  
A mother if no more; wished she had brought  
More happiness to me, material things,  
Delight in life.

Of course her work took strength.

Her life was sapped by service in the war,  
She died for country, for America,  
As much as any soldier. So I say  
If her life came to any waste, what waste  
May her heroic life and death prevent?  
The world has spent two hundred billion dollars  
To put an egotist and strutting despot  
Out of the power he used to tyrannize  
Over his people with a tyranny  
Political in chief, to take away  
The glittering dominion of a crown.  
I want some good to us out of this war,  
And some emancipation. Let me tell you:  
I know a worse thing than a German king:  
It is the social scourge of poverty,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Which cripples, slays the husband and the wife,  
And sends the children forth in life half formed.  
I know a tyranny more insidious  
Than any William had, it is the tyranny  
Of superstition, customs, laws and rules ;  
The tyranny of the church, the tyranny  
Of marriage, and the tyranny of beliefs  
Concerning right and wrong, of good and evil ;  
The tyranny of taboos, the despotism  
That rules our spirits with commands and threats :  
Ghosts of dead faiths and creeds, ghosts of the past.  
The tyranny, in short, that starves and chains  
Imprisons, scourges, crucifies the soul,  
Which only asks the chance to live and love,  
Freely as it wishes, which will live so  
If you take Poverty and chuck him out.  
Then make the main thing inner growth, take rules,  
Conventions and religion (save it be  
The worship of God in spirit without hands  
And without temples sacraments) the babble  
Of moralists, the rant and flummery  
Of preachers and of priests, and chuck them out.  
These things produce your waste and suffering.  
You tell a soul it sins and make it suffer,  
Spend years in impotence and twilight thought.  
You punish where no punishment should be,  
Weaken and break the soul. You weight the soul  
With idols and with symbols meaningless,  
When God gave but three things: the earth and air  
And mind to know them, live in freedom by them.



## MRS. MURRAY

Well, I would have America become  
As free as any soul has ever dreamed her,  
And if America does not get strength  
To free herself, now that the war is over,  
Then Elenor Murray's spirit has not won  
The thing she died for.

So I go my way,  
Back to get supper, I who live, shall die  
In America as it is — Rise up and change it  
For mothers of the future Elenors.

By now the press was full of Elenor Murray.  
And far and near, wherever she was known,  
Had lived, or taught, or studied, tongues were loosed  
In episodes or stories of the girl.  
The coroner on the street was button-holed,  
Received marked articles and letters, some  
Anonymous, some crazy. David Borrow  
Who helped this Alma Bell as lawyer, friend,  
Found in his mail a note from Alma Bell,  
Enclosed with one much longer, written for  
The coroner to read.

When Merival  
Had read it, then he said to Borrow: "Read  
This letter to the other jurors." So  
He read it to them, as they sat one night,  
Invited to the home of Merival  
To drink a little wine and have a smoke,  
And talk about the case.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

### ALMA BELL TO THE CORONER

What my name is, or where I live, or if  
I am that Alma Bell whose name is broached  
With Elenor Murray's who shall know from this?  
My hand-writing I hide in type, I send  
This letter through a friend who will not tell.  
But first, since no chance ever yet was mine  
To speak my heart out, since if I had tried  
These fifteen years ago to tell my heart,  
I must have failed for lack of words and mind,  
I speak my heart out now. I knew the soul  
Of Elenor Murray, knew it at the time,  
Have verified my knowledge in these years,  
Who have not lost her, have kept touch with her  
In letters, know the splendid sacrifice  
She made in the war. She was a human soul  
Earth is not blest with often.

First I say  
I knew her when she first came to my class  
Turned seventeen just then — such blue-bell eyes,  
And such a cataract of dark brown hair,  
And such a brow, sweet lips, and such a way  
Of talking with a cunning gasp, as if  
To catch breath for the words. And such a sense  
Of fitness, beauty, delicacy. But more  
Such vital power that shook her silver nerves,  
And made her dim to others; but to me

## ALMA BELL TO THE CORONER

She was all sanity of soul, her body,  
The instruments of life, were overborne  
By that great flame of hers. And if her music  
Fell sometimes into discord, which I doubt,  
It was her heart-strings which could not vibrate  
For human weakness, what the soul of her  
Struck for response; and when the strings so failed  
She was more grieved than I, or anyone,  
Who listened and expected more.

Well, then

What was my love? I am not loath to tell.  
I could not touch her hand without a thrill,  
Nor kiss her lips but I felt purified,  
Exalted in some way. And if fatigue,  
The hopeless, daily ills of teaching brought  
My spirit to distress, and if I went,  
As oftentimes I did, to call upon her  
After the school hours, as I heard her step  
Responding to my knock, my heart went up,  
Her face framed by the opened door — what peace  
Was mine to see it, peace ineffable  
And rest were mine to sit with her and hear  
That voice of hers where breath was caught for words,  
That cunning gasp and pause!

I loved her then,  
Have loved her always, love her now no less.  
I feel her spirit somehow, can take out  
Her letters, photograph, and find a joy

## DOMESDAY BOOK

That such a soul lived, was in truth my soul,  
Must always be my soul.

What was this love?

Why only this, shame nature if you will:  
But since man's body is not man's alone,  
Nor woman's body wholly feminine,  
A biologic truth, our body's souls  
Are neither masculine nor feminine,  
But part and part; from whence our souls play forth  
Part masculine, part feminine — this woman  
Had that of body first which made her soul,  
Or made her soul play in its way, and I  
Had that of body which made soul of me  
Play in its way. Our music met, that's all,  
And harmonized. The flesh's explanation  
Is not important, nor to tell whence comes  
A love in the heart — the thing is love at last:  
Love which unites and comforts, glorifies,  
Enlarges spirit, woos to generous life,  
Invites to sacrifice, to service, clothes  
This poor dull earth with glory, makes the dawn  
An hour of high resolve, the night a hope  
For dawn for fuller life, the day a time  
For working out the soul in terms of love.  
This was my love for Elenor Murray — this  
Her love for me, I think. Her sacrifice  
In the war I traced to our love — all the good  
Her life set into being, into motion  
Has in it something of this love of ours.

## ALMA BELL TO THE CORONER

How good is God who gives us love, the lens  
Through which we see the beauty, hid from eyes  
That have no love, no lens.

Then what are spirits?

Effluvia material of our bodies?  
Or is the spirit all — the body nothing,  
Since every atom, particle of matter  
With its interstices of soul, divides  
Until there is no matter, only soul?  
But what is love but of the soul — what flesh  
Knows love but through the soul? May it not be  
As soul learns love through flesh, it may at last,  
Helped on its way by flesh, discard the flesh:—  
As cured men leave their crutches — and go on  
Loving with spirits. For it seems to me  
I must find Elenor Murray as a spirit,  
Myself a spirit, love her as I loved her  
These years on earth, but with a clearer fire,  
Flame that is separate from fuel, burning  
Eternal through itself.

And here a word:

My love for Elenor Murray never had  
Other expression than the look of eyes,  
The spiritual thrill of listening to her voice,  
A hand clasp, kiss upon the lips at best,  
Better to find her soul, as Plato says.

Too true I left LeRoy under a cloud,  
Because of love for Elenor Murray — yet

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Not lawless love, I write now to make clear  
What love was mine — and you must understand.  
But let me tell how life has dealt with me,  
Then judge my purpose, dream, the quality  
Of Elenor Murray judge, who in some way,  
Somehow has drawn me onward, upward too,  
I hope, as I have striven.

I did fear  
Her safety, and her future, did reprove  
Her conduct, its appearance, rather more  
In dread of gossip, dread of ways to follow  
From such free ways begun at seventeen,  
In innocence, out of a vital heart.  
But when a bud is opening what stray bees  
Come to drag pollen over it, and set  
Life going to the end in the fruit of life!  
O, my wish was to keep her for some love  
To ripen in a rich maturity.  
My care proved useless — or shall I say so?  
Or anyone say so? since no mind knows  
What failure here may somewhere prove a gain.

There was that man who came into her life  
With heart unsatisfied, bound to a woman  
He wedded early. Elenor Murray's love  
Destroyed this man by human measurements.  
And he destroyed her, so they say. But yet  
She poured her love upon him, lit her soul  
With brighter flames for love of him. At last

## ALMA BELL TO THE CORONER

She knew no thing but love and sacrifice.  
She wrote me last her life was just one pain,  
Had always been so from the first, and now  
She wished to fling her spirit in the war,  
Give, serve, nor count the cost, win death and God  
In service in the war — O, loveliest soul  
I pray and pray to meet you once again!  
So was her life a ruin, was it waste?  
She was a prodigal flower that never shut  
Its petals, even in darkness, let her soul  
Escape when, where it would.

But to myself:

I dragged myself to England from LeRoy  
And plunged in life, philosophies of life,  
Spinoza and what not, read poetry,  
Heard music too, Tschaikowsky, Wagner, all  
Who tried to make sound tell the secret thing  
That drove me wild in searching love. And lovers  
I had one after the other, having fallen  
To that belief the way is by the body.  
But I was fooled and grew by slow degrees.  
And then there came a wild man in my life,  
A vagabond, a madman, genius — well,  
We both went mad, and I smashed everything,  
And ran away, threw all the world for him,  
Only to find myself worn out, half dead  
At last, as it were out of delirium.  
And for four years sat by the sea, or made  
Visits to Paris, where I met the man

## DOMESDAY BOOK

I married. Then how strange! I gave myself  
Wholly to bearing children, just to find  
Some explanation of myself, some work  
Wholly absorbing, lives to take my love.  
And here I was instructed, found a step  
For my poor feet to mount by. Though submerged,  
Alone too much, my husband not the mate  
I dreamed of, hearing echoes in my dreams  
Of London and of Paris, sometimes voices  
Of lovers lost and vanished; still I've found  
A peace sometimes, a stay, too, in the innocence  
And helplessness of children.

But you see,  
In spite of all we do, however high  
And fiercely mounts desire, life imposes  
Repression, sacrifice, renunciation.  
And our poor souls fall muddied in the ditch,  
Or take the discipline and live life out.  
So Elenor Murray lived and did not fail.  
And so it was the knowledge of her life  
Kept me in spite of failures at the task  
Of holding to my self.

These two months passed  
I found I had not killed desire — found  
Among a group a chance to try again  
For happiness, but knew it was not there.  
Then to my children I came back and said:  
“Free once again through suffering.” So I prayed:



## ALMA BELL TO THE CORONER

“ Come to me flame of spirit, fire of worship,  
Bright fire of song; if I but be myself,  
Work through my fate, you shall be mine at last.” . . .  
Then was it that I heard from Elenor Murray —  
Such letters, such outpourings of herself!  
Poor woman leaving love that could not be  
More than it was; how wise she was to fly,  
And use that love for service, as she did;  
Extract its purest essence for the war,  
And ease death with it, merging love and death  
Into that mystic union, seen at last  
By Elenor Murray.

When I heard she came  
All broken from the war, and died somehow  
There by the river, then she seemed to me  
More near — I seemed to feel her; little zephyrs  
Blowing about my face, when I sat looking  
Over the sea in my rose bower, seemed  
The exhalation of her soul that caught  
Its breath for words. I see her in my dreams —  
O, my pure soul, what have you been to me,  
What must you be hereafter!

But my friend,  
And I must call you friend, whose strength in life  
Drives you to find economies of spirit,  
And save the waste of spirit, you must find  
Whatever waste there was of Elenor Murray  
Of love or faith, or time, or strength, great gain

## DOMESDAY BOOK

In spite of early chances, father, mother,  
Too loveless, negligent, or ignorant; .  
Her mother instinct never blessed with children.  
I sometimes think no life is without use —  
For even weeds that sow themselves, frost reaped  
And matted on the ground, enrich the soil,  
Or feed some life. Our eyes must see the end  
Of what these growths are for, before we say  
Where waste is and where gain.

---

Coroner Merival woke to scan the *Times*,  
And read the story of the suicide  
Of Gregory Wenner, circle big enough  
From Elenor Murray's death, but unobserved  
Of Merival, until he heard the hint  
Of Dr. Trace, who made the autopsy,  
That Gregory Wenner might have caused the death  
Of Eleanor Murray, or at least was near  
When Elenor Murray died. Here is the story  
Worked out by Merival as he went about  
Unearthing secrets, asking here and there  
What Gregory Wenner was to Elenor Murray.  
The coroner had a friend who was the friend  
Of Mrs. Wenner. Acting on the hint  
Of Dr. Trace he found this friend and learned  
What follows here of Gregory Wenner, then  
What Mrs. Wenner learned in coming home  
To bury Gregory Wenner. What he learned  
The coroner told the jury. Here's the life  
Of Gregory Wenner first:

## GREGORY WENNER

### GREGORY WENNER

Gregory Wenner's brother married the mother  
Of Alma Bell, the daughter of a marriage  
The mother made before. Kinship enough  
To justify a call on Wenner's power  
When Alma Bell was face to face with shame.  
And Gregory Wenner went to help the girl,  
And for a moment looked on Elenor Murray  
Who left the school-room passing through the hall,  
A girl of seventeen. He left his business  
Of massing millions in the city, to help  
Poor Alma Bell, and three years afterward  
In the Garden of the Gods he saw again  
The face of Elenor Murray — what a fate  
For Gregory Wenner!

But when Alma Bell  
Wrote him for help his mind was roiled with cares:  
A money magnate had signed up a loan  
For half a million, to which Wenner added  
That much beside, earned since his thirtieth year,  
Now forty-two, with which to build a block  
Of sixteen stories on a piece of ground  
Leased in the loop for nine and ninety years.  
But now a crabbed miser, much away,  
Following the sun, and reached through agents, lawyers,  
Owning the land next to the Wenner land,  
Refused to have the sixteen story wall

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Adjoin his wall, without he might select  
His son-in-law as architect to plan  
The sixteen-story block of Gregory Wenner.  
And Gregory Wenner caught in such a trap,  
The loan already bargained for and bound  
In a hard money lender's giant grasp,  
Consented to the terms, let son-in-law  
Make plans and supervise the work.

Five years

Go by before the evil blossoms fully;  
But here's the bud: Gregory Wenner spent  
His half-a-million on the building, also  
Four hundred thousand of the promised loan,  
Made by the money magnate — then behold  
The money magnate said: "You cannot have  
Another dollar, for the bonds you give  
Are scarcely worth the sum delivered now  
Pursuant to the contract. I have learned  
Your architect has blundered, in five years  
Your building will be leaning, soon enough  
It will be wrecked by order of the city."  
And Gregory Wenner found he spoke the truth.  
But went ahead to finish up the building,  
And raked and scraped, fell back on friends for loans,  
Mortgaged his home for money, just to finish  
This sixteen-story building, kept a hope  
The future would reclaim him.

Gregory Wenner

Who seemed so powerful in his place in life

## GREGORY WENNER

Had all along this cancer in his life:  
He owned the building, but he owed the money,  
And all the time the building took a slant,  
By just a little every year. And time  
Made matters worse for him, increased his foes  
As he stood for the city in its warfares  
Against the surface railways, telephones;  
And earned thereby the wrath of money lenders,  
Who made it hard for him to raise a loan,  
Who needed loans habitually. Besides  
He had the trouble of an invalid wife  
Who went from hospitals to sanitariums,  
And traveled south, and went in search of health.

Now Gregory Wenner reaches forty-five,  
He's fought a mighty battle, but grows tired.  
The building leans a little more each year.  
And money, as before, is hard to get.  
And yet he lives and keeps a hope.

At last

He does not feel so well, has dizzy spells.  
The doctor recommends a change of scene.  
And Gregory Wenner starts to see the west.  
He visits Denver. Then upon a day  
He walks about the Garden of the Gods,  
And sees a girl who stands alone and looks  
About the Garden's wonders. Then he sees  
The girl is Elenor Murray, who has grown  
To twenty-years, who looks that seventeen

## DOMESDAY BOOK

When first he saw her. He remembers her,  
And speaks of Alma Bell, that Alma Bell  
Is kindred to him. Where is Alma Bell,  
He has not heard about her in these years?  
And Elenor Murray colors, and says: "Look,  
There is a white cloud on the mountain top."  
And thus the talk commences.

Elenor Murray

Shows forth the vital spirit that is hers.  
She dances on her toes and crows in wonder,  
Flings up her arms in rapture. What a world  
Of beauty and of hope! For not her life  
Of teaching school, a school of Czechs and Poles  
There near LeRoy, since she left school and taught,  
These two years now, nor arid life at home,  
Her father sullen and her mother saddened;  
Nor yet that talk of Alma Bell and her  
That like a corpse's gas has scented her,  
And made her struggles harder in LeRoy —  
Not these have quenched her flame, or made it burn  
Less brightly. Though at last she left LeRoy  
To fly old things, the dreary home, begin  
A new life teaching in Los Angeles.  
Gregory Wenner studies her and thinks  
That Alma Bell was right to reprimand  
Elenor Murray for her reckless ways  
Of strolling and of riding. And perhaps  
Real things were back of ways to be construed  
In innocence or wisdom — for who knows?

## GREGORY WENNER

His thought ran. Such a pretty face, blue eyes,  
And such a buoyant spirit.

So they wandered  
About the Garden of the Gods, and took  
A meal together at the restaurant.  
And as they talked, he told her of himself,  
About his wife long ill, this trip for health —  
She sensed a music sadness in his soul.  
And Gregory Wenner heard her tell her life  
Of teaching, of the arid home, the shadow  
That fell on her at ten years, when she saw  
The hopeless, loveless life of father, mother.  
And his great hunger, and his solitude  
Reached for the soothing hand of Elenor Murray,  
And Elenor Murray having life to give  
By her maternal strength and instinct gave.  
The man began to laugh, forgot his health,  
The leaning building, and the money lenders,  
And found his void of spirit growing things —  
He loved this girl. And Elenor Murray seeing  
This strong man with his love, and seeing too  
How she could help him, with that venturesome  
And prodigal emotion which was hers  
Flung all herself to help him, being a soul  
Who tried all things in courage, staked her heart  
On good to come.

They took the train together.  
They stopped at Santa Cruz, and on the rocks

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Heard the Pacific dash himself and watched  
The moon upon the water, breathed the scent  
Of oriental flowerings. There at last  
Under the spell of nature Gregory Wenner  
Bowed down his head upon his breast and shook  
For those long years of striving and of haggling,  
And for this girl, but mostly for a love  
That filled him now. And when he spoke again  
Of his starved life, his homeless years, the girl,  
Her mind resolved through thinking she could serve  
This man and bring him happiness, but with heart  
Flaming to heaven with the miracle  
Of love for him, down looking at her hands  
Which fingered nervously her dress's hem,  
Said with that gasp which made her voice so sweet:  
"Do what you will with me, to ease your heart  
And help your life."

And Gregory Wenner shaken,  
Astonished and made mad with ecstasy  
Pressed her brown head against his breast and wept.  
And there at Santa Cruz they lived a week,  
Till Elenor Murray went to take her school,  
He to the north en route for home.

Five years  
Had passed since then. And on this day poor Wenner  
Looks from a little office at his building  
Visibly leaning now, the building lost,  
The bonds foreclosed; this is the very day



## GREGORY WENNER

A court gives a receiver charge of it.  
And he, these several months reduced to deals  
In casual properties, in trivial trades,  
Hard pressed for money, has gone up and down  
Pursuing prospects, possibilities,  
Scanning each day financial sheets and looking  
For clues to lead to money. And he finds  
His strength and hope not what they were before.  
His wife is living on, no whit restored.  
And Gregory Wenner thinks, would they not say  
I killed myself because I lost my building,  
If I should kill myself, and leave a note  
That business worries drove me to the deed,  
My building this day taken, a receiver  
In charge of what I builded out of my dream.  
And yet he said to self, that would be false:  
It's Elenor Murray's death that makes this life  
So hard to bear, and thoughts of Elenor Murray  
Make life a torture. First that I had to live  
Without her as my wife, and next the fact  
That I have taken all her life's thought, ruined  
Her chance for home and marriage; that I have seen  
Elenor Murray struggle in the world,  
And go forth to the war with just the thought  
To serve, if it should kill her.

Then his mind  
Ran over these five years when Elenor Murray  
Throughout gave such devotion, constant thought,  
Filled all his mind and heart, and kept her voice

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Singing or talking in his memory's ear,  
In absence with long letters, when together  
With passionate utterances of love. The girl  
Loved Gregory Wenner, but the girl had found  
A comfort for her spiritual solitude,  
And got a strength in taking Wenner's strength.  
For at the last one soul lives on another.  
And Elenor Murray could not live except  
She had a soul to live for, and a soul  
On which to pour her passion, taking back  
The passion of that soul in recompense.  
Gregory Wenner served her power and genius  
For giving and for taking so to live,  
Achieve and flame; and found them in some moods  
Somehow demoniac when his spirits sank,  
And drink was all that kept him on his feet.  
And so when Elenor Murray came to him  
And said this life of teaching was too much,  
Could not be longer borne, he thought the time  
Had come to end the hopeless love. He raised  
The money by the hardest means to pay  
Elenor Murray's training as a nurse,  
By this to set her free from teaching school,  
And then he set about to crush the girl  
Out of his life.

For Gregory Wenner saw  
Between this passion and his failing thought,  
And gray hairs coming, fortune slip like sand.  
And saw his mind diffuse itself in worries,

## GREGORY WENNER

In longing for her: found himself at times  
Too much in need of drink, and shrank to see  
What wishes rose that death might take his wife,  
And let him marry Elenor Murray, cure  
His life with having her beside him, dreaming  
That somehow Elenor Murray could restore  
His will and vision, by her passion's touch,  
And mother instinct make him whole again.  
But if he could not have her for his wife,  
And since the girl absorbed him in this life  
Of separation which made longing greater,  
Just as it lacked the medium to discharge  
The great emotion it created, Wenner  
Caught up his shreds of strength to crush her out  
Of his life, told her so, when he had raised  
The money for her training. For he saw  
How ruin may overtake a man, and ruin  
Pass by the woman, whom the world would judge  
As ruined long ago, But look, he thought,  
I pity her, not for our sin, if it be,  
But that I have absorbed her life; and yet  
The girl is mastering life, while I fall down.  
She has absorbed me, if the wrong lies here.  
And thus his thought went round.

And Elenor Murray  
Accepted what he said and went her way  
With words like these: "My love and prayers are yours  
While life is with us." Then she turned to study,  
And toiled each day till night brought such fatigue

## DOMESDAY BOOK

That sleep fell on her. Was it to forget?  
And meanwhile she embraced the faith and poured  
Her passion driven by a rapturous will  
Into religion, trod her path in silence,  
Save for a card at Christmas time for him,  
Sometimes a little message from some place  
Whereto her duty called her.

Gregory Wenner

Stands at the window of his desolate office,  
And looks out on his sixteen-story building  
Irrevocably lost this day. His mind runs back  
To that day in the Garden of the Gods,  
That night at Santa Cruz, and then his eyes  
Made piercing sharp by sorrow cleave the clay  
That lies upon the face of Elenor Murray,  
And see the flesh of her the worms have now.  
How strange, he thinks, to flit into this life  
Singing and radiant, to suffer, toil,  
To serve in the war, return to girlhood's scenes,  
To die, to be a memory for a day,  
Then be forgotten. O, this life of ours.  
Why is not God ashamed for graveyards, why  
So thoughtless of our passion he lets play  
This tragedy.

And Gregory Wenner thought  
About the day he stood here, even as now  
And heard a step, a voice, and looked around  
Saw Elenor Murray, felt her arms again,

## GREGORY WENNER

Her kiss upon his cheek, and saw her face  
As light was beating on it, heard her gasp  
In ecstasy for going to the war,  
To which that day she gave her pledge. And heard  
Her words of consecration. Heard her say,  
As though she were that passionate Heloise  
Brought into life again: "All I have done  
Was done for love of you, all I have asked  
Was only you, not what belonged to you.  
I did not hope for marriage or for gifts.  
I have not gratified my will, desires,  
But yours I sought to gratify. I have longed  
To be yours wholly, I have kept for self  
Nothing, have lived for you, have lived for you  
These years when you thought best to crush me out.  
And now though there's a secret in my heart,  
Not wholly known to me, still I can know it  
By seeing you again, I think, by touching  
Your hand again. Your life has tortured me,  
Both for itself, and since I could not give  
Out of my heart enough to make your life  
A way of peace, a way of happiness."

Then Gregory Wenner thought how she looked down  
And said: "Since I go to the war, would God  
Look with disfavor on us if you took me  
In your arms wholly once again? My friend,  
Not with the thought to leave me soon, but sleeping  
Like mates, as birds do, making sleep so sweet  
Close to each other as God means we should.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

I mingle love of God with love of you,  
And in the night-time I can pray for you  
With you beside me, find God closer then.  
Who knows, you may take strength from such an hour."  
Then Gregory Wenner lived that night again,  
And the next morning when she rose and shook,  
As it were night gathered dew upon fresh wings,  
The vital water from her glowing flesh.  
And shook her hair out, laughed and said to him:  
"Courage and peace, my friend." And how they passed  
Among the multitude, when he took her hand  
And said farewell, and hastened to this room  
To seek for chances in another day,  
And never saw her more.

And all these thoughts  
Coming on Gregory Wenner swept his soul  
Till it seemed like a skiff in mid-sea under  
A sky unreckoning, where neither bread,  
Nor water, save salt water, were for lips.  
And over him descended a blank light  
Of life's futility, since now this hour  
Life dropped the mask and showed him just a skull.  
And a strange fluttering of the nerves came on him,  
So that he clutched the window frame, lest he  
Spring from the window to the street below.  
And he was seized with fear that said to fly,  
Go somewhere, find some one, so to draw out  
This madness which was one with him and in him,  
And which some one in pity must relieve,

## MRS. GREGORY WENNER

Something must cure. And in this sudden horror  
Of self, this ebbing of the tides of life,  
Leaving his shores to visions, where he saw  
Horrible creatures stir amid the slime,  
Gregory Wenner hurried from the room  
And walked the streets to find his thought again  
Wherewith to judge if he should kill himself  
Or look to find a path in life once more.

And Gregory Wenner sitting in his club  
Wrote to his brother thus: "I cannot live  
Now that my business is so tangled up,  
Bury my body by my father's side."  
Next day the papers headlined Gregory Wenner:  
"Loss of a building drives to suicide."

---

Elenor Murray's death kills Gregory Wenner  
And Gregory Wenner dying make a riddle  
In Mrs. Wenner's life — reveals to her  
A secret long concealed:—

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## MRS. GREGORY WENNER

Gregory Wenner's wife was by the sea  
When Gregory Wenner killed himself, half sick  
And half malingering, and otiose.  
She wept, sent for a doctor to be braced,  
Induced a friend to travel with her west

## DOMESDAY BOOK

To bury Gregory Wenner; did not know  
That Gregory Wenner was in money straits  
Until she read the paper, or had lost  
His building in the loop. The man had kept  
His worries from her ailing ears, was glad  
To keep her traveling, or taking cures.

She came and buried Gregory Wenner; found  
His fortune just a shell, the building lost,  
A little money in the bank, a store  
Far out on Lake Street, forty worthless acres  
In northern Indiana, twenty lots  
In some Montana village. Here she was,  
A widow, penniless, an invalid.  
The crude reality of things awoke  
A strength she did not dream was hers. And then  
She went to Gregory Wenner's barren office  
To collect the things he had, get in his safe  
For papers and effects.

She had to pay  
An expert to reveal the combination,  
And throw the bolts. And there she sat a day,  
And emptied pigeon holes and searched and read.  
And in one pigeon hole she found a box,  
And in the box a lock of hair wrapped up  
In tissue paper, fragrant powder lying  
Around the paper — in the box a card  
With woman's writing on it, just the words  
"For my beloved"; but no name or date.



MRS. GREGORY WENNER

Who was this woman mused the widow there?  
She did not know the name. She did not know  
Her eyes had seen this Elenor Murray once  
When Elenor Murray came with Gregory Wenner  
To dinner at his home to face the wife.  
For Elenor Murray in a mood of strength,  
After her confirmation and communion,  
Had said to Gregory Wenner: "Now the end  
Has come to this, our love, I think it best  
If she should ever learn I am the woman  
Who in New York spent summer days with you,  
And later in Chicago, in that summer,  
She will remember what my eyes will show  
When we stand face to face, and I give proof  
That I am changed, repentant."

For the wife  
Had listened to a friend who came to tell  
She saw this Gregory Wenner in New York  
From day to day in gardens and cafes,  
And by the sea romancing with a girl.  
And later Mrs. Wenner found a book,  
Which Gregory Wenner cherished — with the words  
Beloved, and the date. And now she knew  
The hand that wrote the card here in this box,  
The hand that wrote the inscription in the book  
Were one — but still she did not know the woman.  
No doubt the woman of that summer's flame,  
Whom Gregory Wenner promised not to see  
When she brought out the book and told him all

## DOMESDAY BOOK

She learned of his 'philandering in New York.  
And Elenor Murray's body was decaying  
In darkness, under earth there at LeRoy  
While Mrs. Wenner read, and did not know  
The hand that wrote the card lay blue and green,  
Half hidden in the foldings of the shroud,  
And all that country stirred for Elenor Murray,  
Of which the widow absent in the east  
Had never heard.

And Mrs. Wenner found  
Beside the box and lock of hair three letters,  
And sat and read them. Through her eyes and brain  
This meaning and this sound of blood and soul,  
Like an old record with a diamond needle.  
Passed music like:—

“The days go swiftly by  
With study and with work. I am too tired  
At night to think. I read anatomy,  
Materia medica and other things,  
And do the work an undergraduate  
Is called upon to do. And every week  
I spend three afternoons with the nuns and sew,  
And care for children of the poor whose mothers  
Are earning bread away. I go to church  
And talk with Mother Janet. And I pray  
At morning and at night for you, and ask  
For strength to live without you and for light  
To understand why love of you is mine,

MRS. GREGORY WENNER

And why you are not mine, and whether God  
Will give you to me some day if I prove  
My womanhood is worthy of you, dear.  
And sometimes when our days of bliss come back  
And flood me with their warmth and blinding light  
I take my little crucifix and kiss it,  
And plunge in work to take me out of self,  
Some service to another. So it is,  
This sewing and this caring for the children  
Stills memory and gives me strength to live,  
And pass the days, go on. I shall not draw  
Upon your thought with letters, still I ask  
Your thought of me sometimes. Would it be much  
If once a year you sent me a bouquet  
To prove to me that you remember, sweet,  
Still cherish me a little, give me faith  
That in this riddle world there is a hand,  
Which spite of separation, thinks and touches  
Blossoms that I touch afterward? Dear heart,  
I have starved out and killed that reckless mood  
Which would have taken you and run away.  
Oh, if you knew that this means killing, too,  
The child I want — our child. You have a cross  
No less than I, beloved, even if love  
Of me has passed and eased the agony  
I thought you knew — your cross is heavy, dear,  
Bound, but not wedded to her, never to know  
The life of marriage with her. Yet be brave,  
Be noble, dear, be always what God made you,  
A great heart, patient, gentle, sacrificing,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Bring comfort to her tedious days, forbear  
When she is petulant, for if you do,  
I know God will reward you, give you peace.  
I pray for strength for you, that never again  
May you distress her as you did, I did  
When she found there was someone. Lest she know  
Destroy this letter, all I ever write,  
So that her mind may never fix itself  
Upon a definite person, on myself.  
But still remaining vague may better pass  
To lighter shadows, nothingness at last.  
I try to think I sinned, have so confessed  
To get forgiveness at my first communion.  
And yet a vestige of a thought in me  
Will not submit, confess the sin. Well, dear,  
You can awake at midnight, at the pause  
Of duty in the day, merry or sad,  
Light hearted or discouraged, if you chance,  
To think of me, remember I send prayers  
To God for you each day — oh may His light  
Shine on your face!"

So Widow Wenner read,  
And wondered of the writer, since no name  
Was signed; and wept a little, dried her eyes  
And flushed with anger, said, "adulteress,  
Adulteress who played the game of pity,  
And wove about my husband's heart the spell  
Of masculine sympathy for a sorrowing woman,  
A trick as old as Eden. And who knows

MRS. GREGORY WENNER

But all the money went here in the end?  
For if a woman plunges from her aim  
To piety, devotion such as this,  
She will plunge back to sin, unstable heart,  
That swings from self-denial to indulgence  
And spends itself in both."

Then Widow Wenner

Took up the second letter :

" I have signed  
To go to France to-day. I wrote you once  
I planned to take the veil, become a nun.  
But now the war has changed my thought. I see  
In service for my country fuller life,  
More useful sacrifice and greater work  
Than ever I could have, being a nun.  
The cause is so momentous. Think, my dear,  
This woman who still thinks of you will be  
A factor in this war for liberty,  
A soldier serving soldiers, giving strength,  
Health, hope and spirit to the soldier boys  
Who fall, must be restored to fight again.  
I've thrown my soul in this, am all aflame.  
You should have seen me when I took the oath,  
And raised my hand and pledged my word to serve,  
Support the law. I want to think of you  
As proud of me for doing this — be proud,  
Be grateful, too, that I have strength and will  
To give myself to this. And if it chance,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

As almost I am hoping, that the work  
Should break me, sweep me under, think of me  
As one who died for country, as I shall  
As truly as the soldiers slain in battle.  
I leave to-morrow, will be at a camp  
Some weeks before I sail. I telephoned you  
This morning twice, they said you would return  
By two-o'clock at least. I write instead.  
But I shall come to see you, if I can  
Sometime this afternoon, and if I don't,  
This letter then must answer. Peace be with you.  
To-day I'm very happy. Write to me,  
Or if you do not think it best, all right,  
I'll understand. Before I sail I'll send  
A message to you — for the time farewell."

Then Widow Wenner read the telegram  
The third and last communication: "Sail  
To-day, to-morrow, very soon, I know.  
My memories of you are happy ones.  
A fond adieu." This telegram was signed  
By Elenor Murray. Widow Wenner knew  
The name at last, sat petrified to think  
This was the girl who brazened through the dinner  
Some years ago when Gregory Wenner brought  
This woman to his home — "the shameless trull,"  
Said Mrs. Wenner, "harlot, impudent jade,  
To think my husband is dead, would she were dead —  
I could be happy if I knew a bomb  
Or vile disease had got her." Then she looked

## MRS. GREGORY WENNER

In other pigeon holes, and found in one  
A photograph of Elenor Murray, knew  
The face that looked across the dinner table.  
And in the pigeon hole she found some verses  
Clipped from a magazine, and tucked away  
The letters, verses, telegram in her bag,  
Closed up the safe and left.

Next day at breakfast  
She scanned the morning *Times*, her eyes were wide  
For reading of the Elenor Murray inquest.  
“Well, God is just,” she murmured, “God is just.”

---

All this was learned of Gregory Wenner. Even  
If Gregory Wenner killed the girl, the man  
Was dead now. Could he kill her and return  
And kill himself? The coroner had gone,  
The jury too, to view the spot where lay  
Elenor Murray's body. It was clear  
A man had walked here. Was it Gregory Wenner?  
The hunter who came up and found the body?  
This hunter was a harmless, honest soul  
Could not have killed her, passed the grill of questions  
From David Borrow, skilled examiner,  
The coroner, the jurors. But meantime  
If Gregory Wenner killed this Elenor Murray  
How did he do it? Dr. Trace has made  
His autopsy and comes and makes report  
To the coroner and the jury in these words:—

## DOMESDAY BOOK

### DR. TRACE TO THE CORONER

I cannot tell you, Coroner, the cause  
Of death of Elenor Murray, not until  
My chemical analysis is finished.  
Here is the woman's heart sealed in this jar,  
I weighed it, weight nine ounces, if she had  
A hemolysis, cannot tell you now  
What caused the hemolysis. Since you say  
She took no castor oil, that you can learn  
From Irma Leese, or any witness, still  
A chemical analysis may show  
The presence of ricin,—and that she took  
A dose of oil not pure. Her throat betrayed  
Slight inflammation; but in brief, I wait  
My chemical analysis.

#### Let's exclude

The things we know and narrow down the facts.  
She lay there by the river, death had come  
Some twenty hours before. No stick or stone,  
No weapon near her, bottle, poison box,  
No bruise upon her, in her mouth no dust,  
No foreign bodies in her nostrils, neck  
Without a mark, no punctures, cuts or scars  
Upon her anywhere, no water in lungs,  
No mud, sand, straws or weeds in hands, the nails  
Clean, as if freshly manicured.



## DR. TRACE TO THE CORONER

Again

No evidence of rape. I first examined  
The genitals *in situ*, found them sound.  
The girl had lived, was not a virgin, still  
Had temperately indulged, and not at all  
In recent months, no evidence at all  
Of conjugation willingly or not,  
The day of death. But still I lifted out  
The ovaries, fallopian tubes and uterus,  
The vagina and vulvae. Opened up  
The mammals, found no milk. No pregnancy  
Existed, sealed these organs up to test  
For poison later, as we doctors know  
Sometimes a poison's introduced *per vaginam*.

I sealed the brain up too, shall make a test  
Of blood and serum for urea; death  
Comes suddenly from that, you find no lesion,  
Must take a piece of brain and cut it up,  
Pour boiling water on it, break the brain  
To finer pieces, pour the water off,  
Digest the piece of brain in other water,  
Repeat four times, the solutions mix together,  
Dry in an oven, treat with ether, at last  
The residue put on a slide of glass  
With nitric acid, let it stand awhile,  
Then take your microscope — if there's urea  
You'll see the crystals — very beautiful!  
A cobra's beautiful, but scarce can kill  
As quick as these.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Likewise I have sealed up  
The stomach, liver, kidneys, spleen, intestines,  
So many poisons have no microscopic  
Appearance that convinces, opium,  
Hyoscyamus, belladonna fool us;  
But as the stomach had no inflammation,  
It was not chloral, ether took her off,  
Which we can smell, to boot. But I can find  
Strychnia, if it killed her; though you know  
That case in England sixty years ago,  
Where the analysis did not disclose  
Strychnia, though they hung a man for giving  
That poison to a fellow.

To recur  
I'm down to this: Perhaps a hemolysis —  
But what produced it? If I find no ricin  
I turn to streptococcus, deadly snake,  
Or shall I call him tiger? For I think  
The microscopic world of living things  
Is just a little jungle, filled with tigers,  
Snakes, lions, what you will, with teeth and claws,  
The perfect miniatures of these monstrous foes.  
Sweet words come from the lips and tender hands  
Like Elenor Murray's, minister, nor know  
The jungle has been roused in throat or lungs;  
And shapes venene begin to crawl and eat  
The ruddy apples of the blood, eject  
Their triple venomous excreta in  
The channels of the body.

## DR. TRACE TO THE CORONER

There's the heart,  
Which may be weakened by a streptococcus.  
But if she had a syncope and fell  
She must have bruised her body or her head.  
And if she had a syncope, was held up,  
Who held her up? That might have cost her life:  
To be held up in syncope. You know  
You lay a person down in syncope,  
And oftentimes the heart resumes its beat.  
Perhaps she was held up until she died,  
Then laid there by the river, so no bruise.  
So many theories come to me. But again,  
I say to you, look for a man. Run down  
All clues of Gregory Wenner. He is dead —  
Loss of a building drives to suicide —  
The papers say, but still it may be true  
He was with Elenor Murray when she died,  
Pushed her, we'll say, or struck her in a way  
To leave no mark, a tap upon the heart  
That shocked the muscles more or less obscure  
That bind the auricles and ventricles,  
And killed her. Then he flies away in fear,  
Aghast at what he does, and kills himself.  
Look for a man, I say. It must be true,  
She went so secretly to walk that morning  
To meet a man — why would she walk alone?

So while you hunt the man, I'll look for ricin,  
And with my chemicals end up the search.  
I never saw a heart more beautiful,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Just look at it. We doctors all agreed  
This Elenor Murray might have lived to ninety  
Except for jungles, poison, sudden shock.  
I take my bottle with the heart of Elenor  
And go about my way. It beat in France,  
It beat for France and for America,  
But what is truer, somewhere was a man  
For whom it beat!

---

When Irma Leese, the Aunt of Elenor Murray,  
Appeared before the coroner she told  
Of Elenor Murray's visit, of the morning  
She left to walk, was never seen again.  
And brought the coroner some letters sent  
By Elenor from France. What follows now  
Is what the coroner, or the jury heard  
From Irma Leese, from letters drawn — beside  
The riddle that the death of Elenor Murray  
Sent round the life of Irma Leese, which spread  
To Tokio and touched a man, the son  
Of Irma Leese's sister, dead Corinne,  
The mother of this man in Tokio.

---

## IRMA LEESE

Elenor Murray landing in New York,  
After a weary voyage, none too well,  
Staid in the city for a week and then

## IRMA LEESE

Upon a telegram from Irma Leese,  
Born Irma Fouche, her aunt who lived alone  
This summer in the Fouche house near LeRoy,  
Came west to visit Irma Leese and rest.

For Elenor Murray had not been herself  
Since that hard spring when in the hospital,  
Caring for soldiers stricken with the flu,  
She took bronchitis, after weeks in bed  
Rose weak and shaky, crept to health again  
Through egg-nogs, easy strolls about Bordeaux,  
And later went to Nice upon a furlough  
To get her strength again.

But while she saw  
Her vital flame burn brightly, as of old  
On favored days, yet for the rest the flame  
Sputtered or sank a little. So she thought  
How good it might be to go west and stroll  
About the lovely country of LeRoy,  
And hear the whispering cedars by a window  
In the Fouche mansion where this Irma Leese,  
Her aunt, was summering. So she telegraphed,  
And being welcomed, went.

This stately house,  
Built sixty years before by Arthur Fouche,  
A brick home with a mansard roof, an oriel  
That looked between the cedars, and a porch  
With great Ionic columns, from the street

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Stood distantly amid ten acres of lawn,  
Trees, flower plots — belonged to Irma Leese,  
Who had reclaimed it from a chiropractor,  
To cleanse the name of Fouche from that indignity,  
And bring it in the family again,  
Since she had spent her girlhood, womanhood  
To twenty years amid its twenty rooms.  
For Irma Leese at twenty years had married  
And found herself at twenty-five a widow,  
With money left her, then had tried again,  
And after years dissolved the second pact,  
And made a settlement, was rich in fact,  
Now forty-two. Five years before had come  
And found the house she loved a sanitarium,  
A chiropractor's home. And as she stood  
Beside the fence and saw the oriel,  
Remembered all her happiness on this lawn  
With brothers and with sisters, one of whom  
Was Elenor Murray's mother, then she willed  
To buy the place and spend some summers here.  
And here she was the summer Elenor Murray  
Returned from France.

And Irma Leese had said :

“ Here is your room, it has the oriel,  
And there's the river and the hills for you.  
Have breakfast in your room what hour you will,  
Rise when you will. We'll drive and walk and rest,  
Run to Chicago when we have a mind.

## IRMA LEESE

I have a splendid chauffeur now and maids.  
You must grow strong and well."

And Elenor Murray  
Gasped out her happiness for the pretty room,  
And stood and viewed the river and the hills,  
And wept a little on the gentle shoulder  
Of Irma Leese.

And so the days had passed  
Of walking, driving, resting, many talks;  
For Elenor Murray spoke to Irma Leese  
Of tragic and of rapturous days in France,  
And Irma Leese, though she had lived full years,  
Had scarcely lived as much as Elenor Murray,  
And could not hear enough from Elenor Murray  
Of the war and France, but mostly she would urge  
Her niece to tell of what affairs of love  
Had come to her. And Elenor Murray told  
Of Gregory Wenner, save she did not tell  
The final secret, with a gesture touched  
The story off by saying: It was hopeless,  
I went into religion to forget.  
But on a day she said to Irma Leese:  
"I almost met my fate at Nice," then sketched  
A hurried picture of a brief romance.  
But Elenor Murray told her nothing else  
Of loves or men. But all the while the aunt  
Weighed Elenor Murray, on a day exclaimed:  
"I see myself in you, and you are like

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Your Aunt Corinne who died in ninety-two.  
I'll tell you all about your Aunt Corinne  
Some day when we are talking, but I see  
You have the Fouche blood — we are lovers all.  
Your mother is a lover, Elenor,  
If you would know it."

" O, your Aunt Corinne  
She was most beautiful, but unfortunate.  
Her husband was past sixty when she married,  
And she was thirty-two. He was distinguished,  
Had money and all that, but youth is all,  
Is everything for love, and she was young,  
And he was old."

A week or two had passed  
Since Elenor Murray came to Irma Leese,  
When on a morning fire broke from the eaves  
And menaced all the house; but maids and gardeners  
With buckets saved the house, while Elenor Murray  
And Irma Leese dipped water from the barrels  
That stood along the ell.

A week from that  
A carpenter was working at the eaves  
Along the ell, and in the garret knelt  
To pry up boards and patch. When as he pried  
A board up, he beheld between the rafters  
A package of old letters stained and frayed,  
Tied with a little ribbon almost dust.



## IRMA LEESE

And when he went down-stairs, delivered it  
To Irma Leese and said: Here are some letters  
I found up in the garret under the floor,  
I pried up in my work.

Then Irma Leese  
Looked at the letters, saw her sister's hand,  
Corinne's upon the letters, opened, read,  
And saw the story which she knew before  
Brought back in this uncanny way, the hand  
Which wrote the letters six and twenty years  
Turned back to dust. And when her niece came in  
She showed the letters, said, "I'll let you read,  
I'll tell you all about them":

"When Corinne  
Was nineteen, very beautiful and vital,  
Red-cheeked, a dancer, bubbling like new wine,  
A catch, as you may know, you see this house  
Was full of laughter then, so many children.  
We had our parties, too, and young men thought,  
Each one of us would have a dowry splendid —  
A young man from Chicago came along,  
A lawyer there, but lately come from Pittsburgh  
To practice, win his way. I knew this man.  
He was a handsome dog with curly hair,  
Blue eyes and sturdy figure. Well, Corinne  
Quite lost her heart. He came here to a dance,  
And so the game commenced. And father thought  
The fellow was not right, but all of us,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Your mother and myself said, yes he is,  
And we conspired to help Corinne and smooth  
The path of confidence. But later on  
Corinne was not so buoyant, would not talk  
With me, your mother freely. Then at last  
Her eyes were sometimes red; we knew she wept.  
And, then Corinne was sent away. Well, here  
You'll guess the rest. Her health was breaking down,  
That's true enough; the world could think its thoughts,  
And say his love grew cold, or she found out  
The black-leg that he was, and he was that.  
But Elenor, the truth was more than that,  
Corinne had been betrayed, she went away  
To right herself — these letters prove the case,  
Which all the gossips, busy as they were,  
Could not make out. The paper at LeRoy  
Had printed that she went to pay a visit  
To relatives in the east. Three months or so  
She came back well and rosy. But meanwhile  
Your grandfather had paid this shabby scoundrel  
A sum of money, I forget the sum,  
To get these letters of your Aunt Corinne —  
These letters here. This matter leaked, of course.  
And then we let the story take this form  
And moulded it a little to this form:  
The fellow was a scoundrel — this was proved  
When he took money to return her letters.  
They were love letters, they had been engaged.  
She thought him worthy, found herself deceived  
Proved, too, by taking money, when at first

## IRMA LEESE

He looked with honorable eyes to young Corinne,  
And won her trust. And so Corinne lived here  
Ten years or more, at thirty married the judge,  
Her senior thirty years, and went away.  
She bore a child and died — look Elenor  
Here are the letters which she took and nailed  
Beneath the garret floor. We'll read them through,  
And then I'll burn them."

Irma Leese rose up  
And put the letters in her desk and said:  
"Let's ride along the river." So they rode,  
But as they rode, the day being clear and mild  
The fancy took them to Chicago, where  
They lunched and spent the afternoon, returning  
At ten o'clock that night.

And the next morning  
When Irma Leese expected Elenor  
To rise and join her, asked for her, a maid  
Told Irma Leese that Elenor had gone  
To walk somewhere. And all that day she waited.  
But as night came, she fancied Elenor  
Had gone to see her mother, once rose up  
To telephone, then stopped because she felt  
Elenor might have plans she would not wish  
Her mother to get wind of — let it go.  
But when night came, she wondered, fell asleep  
With wondering and worry.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

But next morning

As she was waiting for the car to come  
To motor to LeRoy, and see her sister,  
Elenor's mother, in a casual way,  
Learn if her niece was there, and waiting read  
The letters of Corinne, the telephone  
Rang in an ominous way, and Irma Leese  
Sprang up to answer, got the tragic word  
Of Elenor Murray found beside the river.  
Left all the letters spilled upon her desk  
And motored to the river, to LeRoy  
Where Coroner Merival took the body.

Just

As Irma Leese departed, in the room  
A sullen maid revengeful for the fact  
She was discharged, was leaving in a day,  
Entered and saw the letters, read a little,  
And gathered them, went to her room and packed  
Her telescope and left, went to LeRoy,  
And gave a letter to this one and that,  
Until the servant maids and carpenters  
And some lubricous fellows at LeRoy  
Who made companions of these serving maids,  
Had each a letter of the dead Corinne,  
Which showed at last, after some twenty years,  
Of silence and oblivion, to LeRoy  
With memory to refresh, that poor Corinne  
Had given her love, herself, had been betrayed,  
Abandoned by a scoundrel.

## IRMA LEESE

Merival,  
The Coroner, when told about the letters,  
For soon the tongues were wagging in LeRoy,  
Went here and there to find them, till he learned  
What quality of love the dead Corinne  
Had given to this man. Then shook his head,  
Resolved to see if he could not unearth  
In Elenor Murray's life some faithless lover  
Who sought her death.

The letters' riddle crawled  
Through shadows of the waters of LeRoy  
Until it looked a snake, was seen as such  
In Tokio by Franklin Hollister,  
The son of dead Corinne; it seemed a snake:  
He heard the coroner through neglect or malice  
Had let the letters scatter — not the truth; —  
The coroner had gathered up the letters,  
Befriending Irma Leese; she got them back  
Through Merival. The riddle's just the same.  
And hence this man in Tokio is crazed  
For shame and fear — for fear the girl he loves  
Will hear his mother's story and break off  
Her marriage promise.

So in reckless rage  
He posts a letter off to Lawyer Hood,  
Chicago, Illinois — the coroner  
Gets all the story through this Lawyer Hood,  
Long after Elenor's inquest is at end.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Meantime he cools, is wiser, thinks it bad  
To stir the scandal with a suit at law.  
And then when cooled he hears from Lawyer Hood  
Who tells him what the truth is. So it ends.

---

These letters and the greenish wave that coiled  
At Tokio is beyond the coroner's eye  
Fixed on the water where the pebble fell:—  
This death of Elenor, circles close at hand  
Engage his interest. Now he seeks to learn  
About her training and religious life.  
And hears of Miriam Fay, a friend he thinks,  
And confidant of her religious life,  
Head woman of the school where Elenor  
Learned chemistry, materia medica,  
Anatomy, to fit her for the work  
Of nursing. And he writes this Miriam Fay  
And Miriam Fay responds. The letter comes  
Before the jury. Here is what she wrote:—

---

### MIRIAM FAY'S LETTER

Elenor Murray asked to go in training  
And came to see me, but the school was full,  
We could not take her. Then she asked to stand  
Upon a list and wait, I put her off.  
She came back, and she came back, till at last  
I took her application; then she came

## MIRIAM FAY'S LETTER

And pushed herself and asked when she could come,  
And start to train. At last I laughed and said :  
" Well, come to-morrow." I had never seen  
Such eagerness, persistence. So she came.  
She tried to make a friend of me, perhaps  
Since it was best, I being in command.  
But anyway she wooed me, tried to please me.  
And spite of everything I grew to love her,  
Though I distrusted her. But yet again  
I had belief in her best self, though doubting  
The girl somehow. But when I learned the girl  
Had never had religious discipline,  
Her father without faith, her mother too,  
Her want of moral sense, I understood.  
She lacked stability of spirit, to-day  
She would be one thing, something else the next.  
Shot up in fire, which failed and died away  
And I began to see her fraternize  
With girls who had her traits, too full of life  
To be what they should be, unstable too,  
Much like herself.

Not long before she came  
Into the training school, six months, perhaps,  
She had some tragedy, I don't know what,  
Had been quite ill in body and in mind.  
When she went into training I could see  
Her purpose to wear down herself, forget  
In weariness of body, something lived.  
She was alert and dutiful and sunny,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Kept all the rules, was studious, led the class,  
Excelled, I think, in studies of the nerves,  
The mind grown sick.

As we grew better friends,  
More intimate, she talked about religion,  
And sacred subjects, asked about the church.  
I gave her books to read, encouraged her,  
Asked her to make her peace with God, and set  
Her feet in pious paths. At last she said  
She wished to be baptized, confirmed. I made  
The plans for her, she was baptized, confirmed,  
Went to confessional, and seemed renewed  
In spirit by conversion. For at once  
Her zeal was like a flame at Pentecost,  
She almost took the veil, but missing that,  
She followed out the discipline to the letter,  
Kept all the feast days, went to mass, communion,  
Did works of charity; indeed, I think  
She spent her spare hours all in all at sewing  
There with the sisters for the poor. She had,  
When she came to me, jewelry of value,  
A diamond solitaire, some other things.  
I missed them, and she said she sold them, gave  
The money to a home for friendless children.  
And I remember when she said her father  
Had wronged, misvalued her; but now her love,  
Made more abundant by the love of Christ,  
Had brought her to forgiveness. All her mood  
Was of humility and sacrifice.



## MIRIAM FAY'S LETTER

One time I saw her at the convent, sitting  
Upon a foot-stool at the gracious feet  
Of the Mother Superior, sewing for the poor ;  
Hair parted in the middle, curls combed out.  
Then was it that I missed her jewelry.  
She looked just like a poor maid, humble, patient,  
Head bent above her sewing, eyes averted.  
The room was silent with religious thought.  
I loved her then and pitied her. But now  
I think she had that in her which at times  
Made her a flagellant, at other times  
A rioter. She used the church to drag  
Her life from something, took it for a bladder  
To float her soul when it was perilled. First,  
She did not sell her jewelry ; this ring,  
Too brilliant for forgetting, or to pass  
Unnoticed when she wore it, showed again  
Upon her finger after she had come  
Out of her training, was a graduate.  
She had a faculty for getting in  
Where elegance and riches were. She went  
Among the great ones, when she found a way,  
And traveled with them where she learned the life  
Of notables, aristocrats. It was there,  
Or when from duty free and feasting, gadding  
The ring showed on her finger.

In two years  
She dropped the church. New friends made in the school,  
New interests, work that took her energies

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And this religious flare had cured her up  
Of what was killing her when first I knew her.  
There was another thing that drew her back  
To flesh, away from spirit: She saw bodies,  
And handled bodies as a nurse, forgot  
The body is the spirit's temple, fell  
To some materialism of thought. And now  
Avoided me, was much away, of course,  
On duty here and there. I tried to hold her,  
Protect and guide her, wrote to her at times  
To make confession, take communion. She  
Ignored these letters. But I heard her say  
The body was as natural as the soul,  
And just as natural its desires. She kept  
Out of the wreck of faith one thing alone,  
If she kept that: She could endure to hear  
God's name profaned, but would not stand to hear  
The Savior's spoken in irreverence.  
She was afraid, no doubt. Or to be just,  
The tender love of Christ, his sacrifice,  
Perhaps had won her wholly — let it go,  
I'll say that much for her.

Why am I harsh?

Because I saw the good in her all streaked  
With so much evil, evil known and lived  
In knowledge of it, clung to none the less,  
Unstable as water, how could she succeed?  
Untruthful, how could confidence be hers?  
I sometimes think she joined the church to mask

## MIRIAM FAY'S LETTER

A secret life, renewed forgiven sins.  
After she cloaked herself with piety.  
Perhaps, at least, when she saw what to do,  
And how to do it, using these detours  
Of piety to throw us off, who else  
Had seen what doors she entered, whence she came.  
She wronged the church, I think, made it a screen  
To stand behind for kisses, to look from  
Inviting kisses. Then, as I have said,  
She took materialism from her work,  
And so renewed her sins. She drank, I think,  
And smoked and feasted; but as for the rest,  
The smoke obscured the flame, but there is flame  
Or fire at least where there is smoke.

You ask

What took her to the war? Why only this:  
Adventure, chance of marriage, amorous conquests —  
The girl was mad for men, although I saw  
Her smoke obscured the flame, I never saw her  
Except with robins far too tame or lame  
To interest her, and robins prove to me  
The hawk is somewhere, waits for night to join  
His playmate when the robins are at rest.  
You see the girl has madness in her, flies  
From exaltation up to ecstasy.  
Feeds on emotion, never has enough.  
Tries all things, states of spirit, even beliefs.  
Passes from lust (I think) to celibacy,  
Feasts, fasts, eats, starves, has raptures then inflicts

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The whip upon her back, is penitent,  
Then proud, is humble, then is arrogant,  
Looks down demurely, stares you out of face,  
But runs the world around. For in point of fact,  
She traveled much, knew cities and their ways;  
And when I used to see her at the convent  
So meek, clothed like a sewing maid, at once  
The pictures that she showed me of herself  
At seaside places or on boulevards,  
Her beauty clothed in linen or in silk,  
Came back to mind, and I would resurrect  
The fragments of our talks in which I saw  
How she knew foods and drinks and restaurants,  
And fashionable shops. This girl could fool the elect —  
She fooled me for a time. I found her out.  
Did she aspire? Perhaps, if you believe  
It's aspiration to seek out the rich,  
And ape them. Not for me. Of course she went  
To get adventure in the war, perhaps  
She got too much. But as to waste of life,  
She might have been a quiet, noble woman  
Keeping her place in life, not trying to rise  
Out of her class — too useless — in her class  
Making herself all worthy, serviceable.  
You'll find 'twas pride that slew her. Very like  
She found a rich man, tried to hold him, lost  
Her honor and her life in consequence.

---

When Merival showed this letter to the jury,  
Marion the juryman spoke up:

[ 100 ]

## ARCHIBALD LOWELL

“ You know that type of woman — saintly hag!  
I wouldn't take her word about a thing  
By way of inference, or analysis.  
They had some trouble, she and Elenor  
You may be sure.” And Merival replied:  
“ Take it for what it's worth. I leave you now  
To see the man who owns the *Daily Times*.  
He's turned upon our inquest, did you see  
The jab he gives me? I can jab as well.”  
So Merival went out and took with him  
A raffle in the waters of circumstance  
Set up by Elenor Murray's death to one  
Remote, secure in greatness — to the man  
Who ran the *Times*.

---

## ARCHIBALD LOWELL

Archibald Lowell, owner of the *Times*  
Lived six months of the year at Sunnyside,  
His Gothic castle near LeRoy, so named  
Because no sun was in him, it may be.  
His wife was much away when on this earth  
At cures, in travel, fighting psychic ills,  
Approaching madness, dying nerves. They said  
Her heart was starved for living with a man  
So cold and silent. Thirty years she lived  
Bound to this man, in restless agony,  
And as she could not free her life from his,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Nor keep it living with him, on a day  
She stuck a gas hose in her mouth and drank  
Her lungs full of the lethal stuff and died.  
That was the very day the hunter found  
Elenor Murray's body near the river.  
A servant saw this Mrs. Lowell lying  
A copy of the *Times* clutched in her hand,  
Which published that a slip of paper found  
In Elenor Murray's pocket had these words  
"To be brave and not to flinch." And was she brave,  
And nerved to end it by these words of Elenor?  
But Archibald, the husband, could not bear  
To have the death by suicide made known.  
He laid the body out, as if his wife  
Had gone to bed as usual, turned a jet  
And left it, just as if his wife had failed  
To fully turn it, then went in the room;  
Then called the servants, did not know that one  
Had seen her with the *Times* clutched in her hand.  
He thought the matter hidden. Merival,  
All occupied with Elenor Murray's death  
Gave to a deputy the Lowell inquest.  
But later what this servant saw was told  
To Merival.

And now no more alone  
Than when his wife lived, Lowell passed the days  
At Sunnyside, as he had done for years.  
He sat alone, and paced the rooms alone,  
With hands behind him clasped, in fear and wonder

## ARCHIBALD LOWELL

Of life and what life is. He rode about,  
And viewed his blooded cattle on the hills.  
But what were all these rooms and acres to him  
With no face near him but the servants, gardeners?  
Sometimes he wished he had a child to draw  
Upon his fabulous income, growing more  
Since all his life was centered in the *Times*  
To swell its revenues, and in the process  
His spirit was more fully in the *Times*  
Than in his body. There were eyes who saw  
How deftly was his spirit woven in it  
Until it was a scarf to bind and choke  
The public throat, or stifle honest thought  
Like a soft pillow offered for the head,  
But used to smother. There were eyes who saw  
The working of its ways emasculate,  
Its tones of gray, where flame had been the thing,  
Its timorous steps, while spying on the public,  
To learn the public's thought. Its cautious pauses,  
With foot uplifted, ears pricked up to hear  
A step fall, twig break. Platitudes in progress —  
With sugar coat of righteousness and order,  
Respectability.

Did the public make it?  
Or did it make the public, that it fitted  
With such exactness in the communal life?  
Some thousands thought it fair — what should they think  
When it played neutral in the matter of news  
To both sides of the question, though at last

## DOMESDAY BOOK

It turned the judge, and chose the better side,  
Determined from the first, a secret plan,  
And cunning way to turn the public scale?  
Some thousands liked the kind of news it printed  
Where no sensation flourished — smallest type  
That fixed attention for the staring eyes  
Needed for type so small. But others knew  
It led the people by its fair pretensions,  
And used them in the end. In any case  
This editor played hand-ball in this way:  
The advertisers tossed the ball, the readers  
Caught it and tossed it to the advertisers:  
And as the readers multiplied, the columns  
Of advertising grew, and Lowell's thought  
Was how to play the one against the other,  
And fill his purse.

It was an ingrown mind,  
And growing more ingrown with time. Afraid  
Of crowds and streets, uncomfortable in clubs,  
No warmth in hands to touch his fellows' hands,  
Keeping aloof from politicians, loathing  
The human alderman who bails the thief;  
The little scamp who pares a little profit,  
And grafts upon a branch that takes no harm.  
He loved the active spirit, if it worked,  
And feared the active spirit, if it played.  
This Lowell hid himself from favor seekers,  
Such letters filtered to him through a sieve  
Of secretaries. If he had a friend,



## ARCHIBALD LOWELL

Who was a mind to him as well, perhaps  
It was a certain lawyer, but who knew?  
And cursed with monophobia, none the less  
This Lowell lived alone there near LeRoy,  
Surrounded by his servants, at his desk  
A secretary named McGill, who took  
Such letters, editorials as he spoke.  
His life was nearly waste. A peanut stand  
Should be as much remembered as the *Times*,  
When fifty years are passed.

And every month  
The circulation manager came down  
To tell the great man of the gain or loss  
The paper made that month in circulation,  
In advertising, chiefly. Lowell took  
The audit sheets and studied them, and gave  
Steel bullet words of order this or that.  
He took the dividends, and put them — where?  
God knew alone.

He went to church sometimes,  
On certain Sundays, for a pious mother  
Had reared him so, and sat there like a corpse,  
A desiccated soul, so dry the moss  
Upon his teeth was dry.

And on a day,  
His wife now in the earth a week or so,  
Himself not well, the doctor there to quiet

## DOMESDAY BOOK

His fears of sudden death, pains in the chest,  
His manager had come — was made to wait  
Until the doctor finished — brought the sheets  
Which showed the advertising, circulation.  
And Lowell studied them and said at last:  
“ That new reporter makes the Murray inquest  
A thing of interest, does the public like it? ”  
To which the manager: “ It sells the paper. ”  
And then the great man: “ It has served its use.  
Now being nearly over, print these words:  
The Murray inquest shows to what a length  
Fantastic wit can go, it should be stopped. ”  
An editorial later might be well:  
Comment upon a father and a mother  
Invaded in their privacy, and life  
In intimate relations dragged to view  
To sate the curious eye.

Next day the *Times*  
Rebuked the coroner in these words. And then  
Merival sent word: “ I come to see you,  
Or else you come to see me, or by process  
If you refuse. ” And so the editor  
Invited Merival to Sunnyside  
To talk the matter out. This was the talk:  
First Merival went over all the ground  
In mild locution, what he sought to do.  
How as departments in the war had studied  
Disease and what not, tabulated facts,  
He wished to make a start for knowing lives,

## ARCHIBALD LOWELL

And finding remedies for lives. It's true  
Not much might be accomplished, also true  
The poet and the novelist gave thought,  
Analysis to lives, yet who could tell  
What system might grow up to find the fault  
In marriage as it is, in rearing children  
In motherhood, in homes; for Merival  
By way of wit said to this dullest man:  
"I know of mother and of home, of heaven  
, I've yet to learn." Whereat the great man winced,  
To hear the home and motherhood so slurred,  
And briefly said the *Times* would go its way  
To serve the public interests, and to foster  
American ideals as he conceived them.  
Then Merival who knew the great man's nature,  
How small it was and barren, cold and dull,  
And wedded to small things, to gold, and fear  
Of change, and knew the life the woman lived,—  
These seven days in the earth — with such a man,  
Just by a zephyr of intangible thought  
Veered round the talk to her, to voice a wonder  
About the jet left turned, his deputy  
Had overlooked a hose which she could drink  
Gas from a jet. "You needn't touch the jet.  
Just leave it as she left it — hide the hose,  
And leave the gas on, put the woman in bed."  
"This deputy," said Merival, "was slack  
And let a verdict pass of accident."  
"Oh yes" said Merival, "your servant told  
About the hose, the *Times* clutched in her hand.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And may I test this jet, while I am here?  
Go up to see and test it?"

### Whereupon

The great man with wide eyes stared in the eyes  
Of Merival, was speechless for a moment,  
Not knowing what to say, while Merival  
Read something in his eyes, saw in his eyes  
The secret beat to cover, saw the man  
Turn head away which shook a little, saw  
His chest expand for breath, and heard at last  
The editor in four steel bullet words,  
"It is not necessary."

### Merival

Had trapped the solitary fox — arose  
And going said: "If it was suicide  
The inquest must be changed."

### The editor

Looked through the window at the coroner  
Walking the gravel walk, and saw his hand  
Unlatch the iron gate, and saw him pass  
From view behind the trees.

### Then horror rose

Within his brain, a nameless horror took  
The heart of him, for fear this coroner  
Would dig this secret up, and show the world  
The dead face of the woman self-destroyed,

## ARCHIBALD LOWELL

And of the talk, which would not come to him,  
To poison air he breathed no less, of why  
This woman took her life; if for ill health  
Then why ill health? O, well he knew at heart  
What he had done to break her, starve her life.  
And now accused himself too much for words,  
Ways, temperament of him that murdered her,  
For lovelessness, and for deliberate hands  
That pushed her off and down.

He rode that day

To see his cattle, overlook the work,  
But when night came with silence and the cry  
Of night-hawks, and the elegy of leaves  
Beneath the stars that looked so cold at him  
As he turned seeking sleep, the dreaded pain  
Grew stronger in his breast. Dawn came at last  
And then the stir and voices of the maids.  
And after breakfast in the carven room  
Archibald Lowell standing by the mantel  
In his great library, felt sudden pain;  
Saw sudden darkness, nothing saw at once,  
Lying upon the marble of the hearth;  
His great head cut which struck the post of brass  
In the hearth's railing — only a little blood!  
Archibald Lowell being dead at last;  
The *Times* left to the holders of the stock  
Who kept his policy, and kept the *Times*  
As if the great man lived.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

### And Merival

Taking the doctor's word that death was caused  
By angina pectoris, let it drop.  
And went his way with Elenor Murray's case.

---

So Lowell's dead and buried; had to die,  
But not through Elenor Murray. That's the Fate  
That laughs at greatness, little things that sneak  
From alien neighborhoods of life and kill.  
And Lowell leaves a will, to which a boy —  
Who sold the *Times* once, afterward the *Star* —  
Is alien as this Elenor to the man  
Who owned the *Times*. But still is brought in touch  
With Lowell's will, because this Lowell died  
Before he died. And Merival learns the facts  
And brings them to the jury in these words: —

---

## WIDOW FORTELKA

Marie Fortelka, widow, mother of Josef,  
Now seventeen, an invalid at home  
In a house, in Halstead Street, his running side  
Aching with broken ribs, read in the *Times*  
Of Lowell's death the editor, dressed herself  
To call on William Rummler, legal mind  
For Lowell and the *Times*.

## WIDOW FORTELKA

It was a day  
When fog hung over the city, and she thought  
Of fogs in Germany whence she came, and thought  
Of hard conditions there when she was young.  
Then as her boy, this Josef, coughed, she looked  
And felt a pang at heart, a rise of wrath,  
And heard him moan for broken ribs and lungs  
That had been bruised or mashed. America,  
Oh yes, America, she said to self,  
How is it different from the land I left?  
And then her husband's memory came to mind:  
How he had fled his country to be free,  
And come to Philadelphia, with the thrill  
Of new life found, looked at the famous Hall  
Which gave the Declaration, cried and laughed  
And said: "The country's free, and I am here,  
I am free now, a man, no more a slave."  
What did he find? A job, but prices high.  
Wages decreased in winter, then a strike.  
He joined the union, found himself in jail  
For passing hand-bills which announced the strike,  
And asked the public to take note, and punish  
The corporation, not to trade with it,  
For its injustice toward the laborers.  
And in the court he heard the judge decide:  
"Free speech cannot be used to gain the ends  
Of ruin by conspiracy like this  
Against a business. Men from foreign lands,  
Of despot rule and poverty, who come  
For liberty and means of life among us

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Must learn that liberty is ordered liberty,  
And is not license, freedom to commit  
Injury to another."

So in jail

He lay his thirty days out, went to work  
Where he could find it, found the union smashed,  
Himself compelled to take what job he could,  
What wages he was offered. And his children  
Kept coming year by year till there were eight,  
And Josef was but ten. And then he died  
And left this helpless family, and the boy  
Sold papers on the street, ten years of age,  
The widow washed.

And first he sold the *Times*  
And helped to spread the doctrines of the *Times*  
Of ordered liberty and epicene  
Reforms of this or that. But when the *Star*  
With millions back of it broke in the field  
He changed and sold the *Star*, too bad for him —  
Discovered something:

Josef did not know

The corners of the street are free to all,  
Or free to none, where newsboys stood and sold,  
And kept their stands, or rather where the powers  
That kept the great conspiracy of the press  
Controlled the stands, and to prevent the *Star*  
From gaining foot-hold. Not upon this corner



## WIDOW FORTELKA

Nor on that corner, any corner in short  
Shall newsboys sell the *Star*. But Josef felt,  
Being a boy, indifferent to the rules,  
Well founded, true or false, that all the corners  
Were free to all, and for his daring, strength  
Had been selected, picked to sell the *Star*,  
And break the ground, gain place upon the stands.  
He had been warned from corners, chased and boxed  
By heavy fists from corners more than once  
Before the day they felled him. On that day  
A monster bully, once a pugilist,  
Came on him selling the *Star* and knocked him down,  
Kicked in his ribs and broke a leg and cracked  
His little skull.

And so they took him home  
To Widow Fortelka and the sisters, brothers,  
Whose bread he earned. And there he lay and moaned,  
And when he sat up had a little cough,  
Was short of breath.

And on this foggy day  
When Widow Fortelka reads in the *Times*  
That Lowell, the editor, is dead, he sits  
With feet wrapped in a quilt and gets his breath  
With open mouth, his face is brightly flushed;  
A fetid sweetness fills the air of the room  
That from his open mouth comes. Josef lingers  
A few weeks yet — he has tuberculosis.  
And so his mother looks at him, resolves

## DOMESDAY BOOK

To call this day on William Rummmler, see  
If Lowell's death has changed the state of things;  
And if the legal mind will not relent  
Now that the mind that fed it lies in death.  
It's true enough, she thinks, I was dismissed,  
And sent away for good, but never mind.  
It can't be true this pugilist went farther  
Than the authority of his hiring, that's  
The talk this lawyer gave her, used a word  
She could not keep in mind — the lawyer said  
*Respondeat superior* in this case  
Was not in point — and if it could be proved  
This pugilist was hired by the *Times*,  
No one could prove the *Times* had hired him  
To beat a boy, commit a crime. Well, then  
“What was he hired for?” the widow asked.  
And then she talked with newsboys, and they said  
The papers had their sluggers, all of them,  
Even the *Star*, and that was just a move  
In getting circulation, keeping it.  
And all these sluggers watched the stands and drove  
The newsboys selling *Stars* away.

No matter,  
She could not argue with this lawyer Rummmler,  
Who said: “You must excuse me, go away,  
I'm sorry, but there's nothing I can do.”

Now Widow Fortelka had never heard  
Of Elenor Murray, had not read a line

## WIDOW FORTELKA

Of Elenor Murray's death beside the river.  
She was as ignorant of the interview  
Between the coroner and this editor  
Who died next morning fearing Merival  
Would dig up Mrs. Lowell and expose  
Her suicide, as conferences of spirits  
Directing matters in another world.  
Her thought was moulded no less by the ruffles  
That spread from Elenor Murray and her death.  
And she resolved to see this lawyer Rummler,  
And try again to get a settlement  
To help her dying boy. And so she went.

That morning Rummler coming into town  
Had met a cynic friend upon the train  
Who used his tongue as freely as his mood  
Moved him to use it. So he said to Rummler:  
"I see your client died — a hell of a life  
That fellow lived, a critic in our midst  
Both hated and caressed. And I suppose  
You drew his will and know it, I will bet,  
If he left anything to charity,  
Or to the city, it is some narcotic  
To keep things as they are, the ailing body  
To dull and bring forgetfulness of pain.  
He was a fine albino of the soul,  
No pigment in his genesis to give  
Color to hair or eyes, he had no gonads."  
And William Rummler laughed and said, "You'll see  
What Lowell did when I probate the will."

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Then William Rummler thought that very moment  
Of plans whereby his legal mind could thrive  
Upon the building of the big hotel  
To Lowell's memory, for perpetual use  
Of the Y. M. C. A., the seminary, too,  
In Moody's memory for an orthodox  
Instruction in the bible.

With such things  
In mind, this William Rummler opened the door,  
And stepped into his office, got a shock  
From seeing Widow Fortelka on the bench,  
Where clients waited, waiting there for him.  
She rose and greeted him, and William Rummler  
Who in a stronger moment might have said:  
"You must excuse me, I have told you, madam,  
I can do nothing for you," let her follow  
Into his private office and sit down  
And there renew her suit.

She said to him:  
"My boy is dying now, I think his ribs  
Were driven in his lungs and punctured them.  
He coughs the worst stuff up you ever saw.  
And has an awful fever, sweats his clothes  
Right through, is breathless, cannot live a month.  
And I know you can help me. Mr. Lowell,  
So you told me, refused a settlement,  
Because this pugilist was never hired  
To beat my boy, or any boy; for fear

## WIDOW FORTELKA

It would be an admission, and be talked of,  
And lead another to demand some money.  
But now he's dead, and surely you are free  
To help me some, so that this month or two,  
While my boy Joe is dying he can have  
What milk he wants and food, and when he dies,  
A decent coffin, burial. Then perhaps  
There will be something left to help me with —  
I wash to feed the children, as you know."

And William Rummler looked at her and thought  
For one brief moment with his lawyer mind  
About this horror, while the widow wept,  
And as she wept a culprit mood was his  
For thinking of the truth, for well he knew  
This slugger had been hired for such deeds,  
And here was one result. And in his pain  
The cynic words his friend had said to him  
Upon the train began to stir, and then  
He felt a rush of feeling, blood, and thought  
Of clause thirteen in Lowell's will, which gave  
The trustees power, and he was chief trustee,  
To give some worthy charity once a year,  
Not to exceed a thousand dollars. So  
He thought to self, "This is a charity.  
I will advance the money, get it back  
As soon as I probate the will."

At last

He broke this moment's musing and spoke up:

## DOMESDAY BOOK

“Your case appeals to me. You may step out,  
And wait till I prepare the papers, then  
I'll have a check made for a thousand dollars.”

Widow Fortelka rose up and took  
The crucifix she wore and kissed it, wept  
And left the room.

---

Now here's the case of Percy Ferguson  
You'd think his life was safe from Elenor Murray.  
No preacher ever ran a prettier boat  
Than Percy Ferguson, all painted white  
With polished railings, flying at the fore  
The red and white and blue. Such little waves  
Set dancing by the death of Elenor Murray  
To sink so fine a boat, and leave the Reverend  
To swim to shore! he couldn't walk the waves!

---

### REV. PERCY FERGUSON

The Rev. Percy Ferguson, patrician  
Vicar of Christ, companion of the strong,  
And member of the inner shrine, where men  
Observe the rituals of the golden calf;  
A dilettante, and writer for the press  
Upon such themes as optimism, order,  
Obedience, beauty, law, while Elenor Murray's

REV. PERCY FERGUSON

Life was being weighed by Merival  
Preached in disparagement of Merival  
Upon a fatal Sunday, as it chanced,  
Too near to doom's day for the clergyman.  
For, as the word had gone about that waste  
In lives preoccupied this Merival,  
And many talked of waste, and spoke a life  
Where waste had been in whole or part — the pulpit  
Should take a hand, thought Ferguson. And so  
The Reverend Percy Ferguson preached thus  
To a great audience and fashionable:  
"The hour's need is a firmer faith in Christ,  
A closer hold on God, belief again  
In sin's reality; the age's vice  
Is laughter over sin, the attitude  
That sin is not!" And then to prove that sin  
Is something real, he spoke of money sins  
That bring the money panics, of the beauty  
That lust corrupts, wound up with Athen's story,  
Which sin decayed. And touching on this waste,  
Which was the current talk, what is this waste  
Except a sin in life, the moral law  
Transgressed, God mocked, the order of man's life,  
And God's will disobeyed? Show me a life  
That lives through Christ and none shall find a waste."  
This clergyman some fifteen years before  
Went on a hunt for Alma Bell, who taught  
The art department of the school, and found  
Enough to scare the school directors that  
She burned with lawless love for Elenor Murray.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And made it seem the teacher's reprimand  
In school of Elenor Murray for her ways  
Of strolling, riding with young men at night,  
Was moved by jealousy of Elenor Murray,  
Being herself in love with Elenor Murray.  
This clergyman laid what he found before  
The school directors, Alma Bell was sent  
Out of the school her way, and disappeared. . . .  
But now, though fifteen years had passed, the story  
Of Alma Bell and Elenor Murray crept  
Like poisonous mist, scarce seen, around LeRoy.  
It had been so always. And all these years  
No one would touch or talk in open words  
The loathsome matter, since girls grown to women,  
And married in the town might have their names  
Relinked to Alma Bell's. And was it true  
That Elenor Murray strayed as a young girl  
In those far days of strolls and buggy rides?

But after Percy Ferguson had thundered  
Against the inquest, Warren Henderson,  
A banker of the city, who had dealt  
In paper of the clergyman, and knew  
The clergyman had interests near Victoria,  
Was playing at the money game, and knew  
He tottered on the brink, and held to hands  
That feared to hold him longer — Henderson,  
A wise man, cynical, contemptuous  
Of frocks so sure of ways to avoid the waste,  
So unforgiving of the tangled moods



REV. PERCY FERGUSON

And baffled eyes of men; contemptuous  
Of frocks so avid for the downy beds,  
Place, honors, money, admiration, praise,  
Much wished to see the clergyman come down  
And lay his life beside the other sinners.  
But more he knew, admired this Alma Bell,  
Did not believe she burned with guilty love  
For Elenor Murray, thought the moral hunt  
Or Alma Bell had made a waste of life,  
As ignorance might pluck a flower for thinking  
It was a weed; on Elenor Murray too  
Had brought a waste, by scenting up her life  
With something faint but ineradicable.  
And Warren Henderson would have revenge,  
And waited till old Jacob Bangs should fix  
His name to paper once again of Ferguson's  
To tell old Jacob Bangs he should be wary,  
Since banks and agencies were tremulous  
With hints of failure at Victoria.

So meeting Jacob Bangs the banker told him  
What things were bruited, and warned the man  
To fix his name no more to Ferguson's paper.  
It was the very day the clergyman  
Sought Jacob Bangs to get his signature  
Upon a note for money at the bank.  
And Jacob Bangs was silent and evasive,  
Demurred a little and refused at last.  
Which sent the anxious clergyman adrift  
To look for other help. He looked and looked,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And found no other help. Associates  
Depending more on men than God, fell down,  
And in a day the bubble burst. The *Times*  
Had columns of the story.

In a week,  
At Sunday service Percy Ferguson  
Stood in the pulpit to confess his sin,  
The Murray jury sat and fed their joy  
For hearing Ferguson confess his sin.  
This is the way he did it:

“ First, my friends,  
I do not say I have betrayed the trust  
My friends have given me. Some years ago  
I thought to make provision for my wife,  
I wished to start some certain young men right.  
I had another plan I can't disclose,  
Not selfish, you'll believe me. So I took  
My savings made as lecturer and writer  
And put them in this venture. I'm ashamed  
To say how great those savings were, in view  
Of what the poor earn, those who work with hands!  
Ashamed too, when I think these savings grew  
Because I spoke the things the rich desired.  
And squared my words with what the strong would  
have —  
Therein Christ was betrayed. The end has come.  
I too have been betrayed, my confidence  
Wronged by my fellows in the enterprise.

REV. PERCY FERGUSON

I hope to pay my debts. Hard poverty  
Has come to me to bring me back to Christ."

" But listen now : These years I lived perturbed,  
Lest this life which I grew into would mould  
Young men and ministers, lead them astray  
To public life, sensation, lecture platforms,  
Prosperity, away from Christ-like service,  
Obscure and gentle. To those souls I owe  
My heart's confession: I have loved my books  
More than the poor, position more than service,  
Office and honor over love of men ;  
Lived thus when all my strength belonged to thought,  
To work for schools, the sick, the poor, the friendless,  
To boys and girls with hungry minds. My friends,  
Here I abase my soul before God's throne,  
And ask forgiveness for the pious zeal  
With which I smote the soul of Alma Bell,  
And smudged the robe of Elenor Murray. God,  
Thou, who has taken Elenor Murray home,  
After great service in the war, O grant  
Thy servant yet to kneel before the soul  
Of Elenor Murray. For who am I to judge?  
What was I then to judge? who coveted honors,  
When solitude, where I might dwell apart,  
And listen to the voice of God was mine,  
By calling and for seeking. I have broken  
The oath I took to take no purse or scrip.  
I have loved money, even while I knew  
No servant of Christ can work for Christ and strive

## DOMÉSDAY BOOK

For money. And if anywhere there be  
A noble boy who would become a minister,  
Who has heard me, or read my books, and grown  
Thereby to cherish secular ideas  
Of Christ's work in the world, to him I say:  
Repent the thought, reject me; there are men  
And women missionaries, here, abroad,  
And nameless workers in poor settlements  
Whose latches to stoop down and to unloose  
I am unworthy."

“ Gift of life too short!  
O, beautiful gift of God, too brief at best,  
For all a man can do, how have I wasted  
This precious gift! How wasted it in pride,  
In seeking out the powerful, the great,  
The hands with honors, gold to give — when nothing  
Is profitable to a servant of the Christ  
Except to shepherd Christ's poor. O, young men,  
Interpret not your ministry in terms  
Of intellect alone, forefront the heart,  
That at the end of life you may look up  
And say to God: Behind these are the sheep  
Thou gavest me, and not a one is lost.”

“ As to my enemies, for enemies  
A clergyman must have whose fault is mine,  
Plato would have us harden hearts to sorrow.  
And Zeno roofs of slate for souls to slide  
The storm of evil — Christ in sorrow did

REV. PERCY FERGUSON

For evil good. For me, my prayer is this,  
My faith as well, that I may be perfected  
Through suffering."

That ended the confession.  
Then "Love Divine, All Love Excelling" sounded.  
The congregation rose, and some went up  
To take the pastor's hand, but others left  
To think the matter over.

For some said:  
"He married fortunate." And others said:  
"We know through Jacob Bangs he has investments  
In wheat lands, what's the truth? In any case  
What avarice is this that made him anxious  
About the comfort of his wife and family?  
The thing won't work. He's only middle way  
In solving his soul's problem. This confession  
Is just a poor beginning." Others said:  
"He drove out Alma Bell, let's drive him out."  
And others said: "you note we never heard  
About this speculation till it failed,  
And he was brought to grief. If it had prospered  
The man had never told, what do you think?"  
But in a year as health failed, Ferguson  
Took leave of absence, and the silence of life  
Which closes over men, however noisy  
With sermons, lectures, covered him. His raffle  
Died out in distant waters.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

There was a Doctor Burke lived at LeRoy,  
Neurologist and student. On a night  
When Merival had the jury at his house,  
Llewellyn George was telling of his travels  
In China and Japan, had mutual friends  
With Franklin Hollister, the cousin of Elenor,  
And son of dead Corinne, who hid her letters  
Under the eaves. The talk went wide and far.  
For David Borrow, sunny pessimist,  
Thrust logic words at Maiworm, the juryman;  
And said our life was bad, and must be so,  
While Maiworm trusted God, said life was good.  
And Winthrop Marion let play his wit,  
The riches of his reading over all.  
Thus as they talked this Doctor Burke came in.  
"You'll pardon this intrusion, I'll go on  
If this is secret business. Let me say  
This inquest holds my interest and I've come  
To tell of Elenor's ancestry." Thus he spoke.  
"There'll be another time if I must go."  
And Merival spoke up and said: "why stay  
And tell us what you know, or think," and so  
The coroner and jury sat and heard:—

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### DR. BURKE

You've heard of potters' wheels and potters' hands.  
I had a dream that told the human tale  
As well as potters' wheels or potters' hands.



## DOMESDAY BOOK

Man can subdue the giant hand that stirs,  
Or turns the wheel, and so these visions err.  
For as this farmer, lately come to town,  
Picks out the finest corn seeds, and so crops  
A finer corn, let's look to human seed,  
And raise a purer stock; let's learn of him,  
Who does not put defective grains aside  
For planting in the spring, but puts aside  
The best for planting. For I'd like to see  
As much care taken with the human stock  
As men now take of corn, race-horses, hogs.  
You, Coroner Merival are right, I think.  
If we conserve our forests, waterways,  
Why not the stream of human life, which wastes  
Because its source is wasted, fouled.

Perhaps

Our coroner has started something good,  
And brought to public mind what might result  
If every man kept record of the traits  
Known in his family for the future use  
Of those to come in choosing mates.

Behold,

Your moralists and churchmen with your rules  
Brought down from Palestine, which says that life  
Though tainted, maddened, must not be controlled,  
Diverted, headed off, while life in corn,  
And life in hogs, that feed the life of man  
Should be made better for the life of man —



DR. BURKE

Behold, I say, some hundred millions spent  
On paupers, epileptics, deaf and blind;  
On feeble minded, invalids, the insane —  
Behold, I say, this cost in gold alone,  
Leave for the time the tragedy of souls,  
Who suffer or must see such suffering,  
And then turn back to what? The hand that stirs,  
The potter's hand? Why, no — the marriage counter  
Where this same state in Christian charity  
Spending its millions, lets the fault begin,  
And says to epileptics and what not: —  
“ Go breed your kind, for Jesus came to earth,  
And we will house and feed your progeny,  
Or hang, incarcerate your murderous spawn,  
As it may happen.”

And all the time we know  
As small grains fruit in small grains, even man  
In fifty matters of pathology  
Transmits what's in him, blindness, imbecility,  
Hysteria, susceptibilities  
To cancer and tuberculosis. Also  
The soil that sprouts the giant weed of madness —  
There's soil which will not sprout them, occupied  
Too full by blossoms, healthy trees.

We know  
Such things as these — Well, I would sterilize,  
Or segregate these shriveled seeds and keep  
The soil of life for seeds select, and take

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The church and Jesus, if he's in the way,  
And say: "You stand aside, and let me raise  
A better and a better breed of men."  
Quit, shut your sniveling charities; have mercy  
Not on these paupers, imbeciles, diseased ones,  
But on the progeny you let them breed.  
And thereby sponge the greatest waste away,  
And source of life's immeasurable tragedies.  
Avaunt you potter hands and potter wheels!  
God is within us, not without us, we  
Are given souls to know and see and guide  
Ourselves and those to come, souls that compute  
The calculus of beauties, talents, traits,  
And show us that the good in seed strives on  
To master stocks; that even poisoned blood,  
And minds in chemic turmoils, mixed with blood  
And minds in harmony, work clean at last —  
Else how may normal man to-day be such  
With some eight billion ancestors behind,  
And something in him of the blood of all  
Who lived five hundred years ago or so,  
Who were diseased with alcohol and pork,  
And poverty? But oh these centuries  
Of agony and waste! Let's stop it now!  
And since this God within us gives us choice  
To let the dirty plasma flow or dam it,  
To give the channel to the silver stream  
Of starry power, which shall we do? Now choose  
Between your race of drunkards, imbeciles,  
Lunatics and neurotics, or the race

DR. BURKE

Of those who sing and write, or measure space,  
Build temples, bridges, calculate the stars,  
Live long and sanely.

Well, I take my son,  
I could have prophesied his eyes, through knowing  
The color of my mother's, father's eyes,  
The color of his mother's parent's eyes.  
I could have told his hair.

There's subtler things.  
My father died before this son was born;  
Why does this son smack lips and turn his hand  
Just like my father did? Not imitation —  
He never saw him, and I do not do so.  
Refine the matter where you will, how far  
You choose to go, it is not eyes and hair,  
Chins, shape of head, of limbs, or shape of hands,  
Nor even features, look of eyes, nor sound  
Of voice that we inherit, but the traits  
Of inner senses, spiritual gifts, and secret  
Beauties and powers of spirit, which result  
Not solely by the compound of the souls  
Through conjugating cells, but in the fusion  
Something arises like an unknown X  
And starts another wonder in the soul,  
That comes from souls compounded.

Coroner  
You have done well to study Elenor Murray.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

How do I view the matter? To begin  
Here is a man who looks upon a woman,  
Desires her, so they marry, up they step  
Before the marriage counter, buy a license  
To live together, propagate their kind.  
No questions asked. I'll later come to that.  
This couple has four children, Elenor  
Is second to be born. I knew this girl,  
I cared for her at times when she was young —  
Well, for the picture general, she matures  
Goes teaching school, leaves home, goes far away,  
Has restlessness and longings, ups and downs  
Of ecstasy and depression, has a will  
Which drives her onward, dreams that call to her.  
Goes to the war at last to sacrifice  
Her life in duty, and the root of this  
Is masochistic (though I love the flower),  
Comes back and dies. I call her not a drop  
Slopped from the giant bowl; she is a growth  
Proceeding on clear lines, if we could know,  
From cells that joined, and had within themselves  
The quality of the stream whose source I see  
As far as grandparents. And now to this:

We all know what her father, mother are.  
No doubt the marriage counter could have seen —  
Or asked what was not visible. But who knows  
About the father's parents, or the mother's?  
I chance to know.

DR. BURKE

The father drinks, you say?

Well, he drank little when this child was born,  
Had he drunk much, it is the nerves which crave  
The solace of the cup, and not the cup  
Which passes from the parent to the child.  
His father and his mother were good blood,  
Steady, industrious; and just because  
His father and his mother had the will  
To fight privation, and the lonely days  
Of pioneering, so this son had will  
To fight, aspire, but at the last to growl,  
And darken in that drug store prison, take  
To drink at times in anger for a will  
That was so balked.

Well, then your marriage counter  
Could scarcely ask: What is your aim in life?  
You clerk now in a drug store, you aspire  
To be a lawyer, if you find yourself  
Stopped on your way by poverty, the work  
Of clerking to earn bread, you will break down,  
And so affect your progeny. So, you see,  
For all of that the daughter Elenor  
Was born when this ambition had its hope,  
Not when it tangled up in hopelessness;  
And therefore is thrown out of the account.  
The father must be passed and given license  
To wed this woman. How about the mother?  
You never knew the mother of the mother.  
She had great power of life and power of soul,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Lived to be eighty-seven, to the last  
Was tense, high voiced, excitable, ecstatic,  
Top full of visions, dreams, and plans for life.  
But worse than that at fifty lost her mind,  
Was two years kept at Kankakee, quite mad,  
Grieving for fancied wrongs against her husband  
Some five years dead, and praying to keep down  
Desire for men. Her malady was sensed  
When she began to wander here and there,  
In shops and public places, in the church,  
Wherever she could meet with men, one man  
Particularly to whom she made advances  
Unwomanly and strange. And so at last  
She turned her whole mind to the church, became  
Religion mad, grew mystical, believed  
That Jesus Christ had taken her to spouse.  
They kept her in confinement for two years.  
The rage died down at last, and she came home.  
But to the last was nervous, tense, high keyed.  
And then her mind failed totally, she died  
At eighty-seven here.

Now I could take  
Some certain symbols A and a, and show  
Out of the laws that Mendel found for us,  
What chances Elenor Murray had to live  
Free of the madness, clear or in dilute,  
Diminished or made over, which came down  
From this old woman to her. It's enough  
To see in Elenor Murray certain traits,

DR. BURKE

Passions and powers, ecstasies and sorrows.  
And from them life's misfortunes, and to see  
They tally, take the color of the soul  
Of this old woman, back of her. Even to see  
In Elenor Murray's mother states of soul,  
And states of nerves, passed on to Elenor Murray  
Directly by her mother.

But you say,  
Since many say so, here's a woman's soul  
Most beautiful and serviceable in the world  
And she confutes you, in your logic chopping,  
Materialistic program, who would give  
The marriage counter power to pick the corn seed  
For future planting:

No, I say to this.  
What does it come to? She had will enough,  
And aspiration, struck out for herself,  
Learned for herself, did service in the war,  
As many did, and died — all very good.  
But not so good that we could quite afford  
To take the chances on some other things  
Which might have come from her. Well, to begin  
Putting aside an autopsy, she died  
Because this neural weakness, so derived,  
Caught in such stress of life proved far too much  
For one so organized; a stress of life  
Which others could live through, and have lived through.  
The world had Elenor Murray, and she died

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Before she was a cost.— But just suppose  
No war had been to aureole her life —  
And she had lived here and gone mad at last  
Become a charge upon the state? Or yet,  
As she was love-mad, by the common word,  
And as she had neurotic tendencies,  
Would seek neurotic types therefore, suppose  
She had with some neurotic made a marriage,  
And brought upon us types worse than themselves;  
Given us the symbol double A instead  
Of big and little a, where are you then?  
You have some suicides, or murders maybe,  
Some crimes in sex, some madness on your hands,  
For which to tax the strong to raise, and raise  
Some millions every year.

### Are we so mad

For beauty, sacrifice and heroism,  
So hungry for the stimulus of these  
That we cannot discern and fairly appraise  
What Elenor Murray was, what to the world  
She brought, for which we overlook the harm  
She might have done the world? Not if we think!  
And if we think, she will not seem God's flower  
Made spotted, pale or streaked by cross of breed,  
A wonder and a richness in the world;  
But she will seem a blossom which to these  
Added a novel poison with the power  
To spread her poison! And we may dispense  
With what she did and what she tried to do,



## DR. BURKE

No longer sentimentalists, to keep  
The chances growing in the world to bring  
A better race of men.

Then Doctor Burke  
Left off philosophy and asked: "How many  
Of you who hear me, know that Elenor Murray  
Was distant cousin to this necrophile,  
This Taylor boy, I call him boy, though twenty,  
Who got the rope for that detested murder  
Of a young girl — Oh yes, let's save the seed  
Of stock like this!"

But only David Borrow  
Knew Elenor was cousin to this boy.  
And Merival spoke up: "What is to-day?  
It's Thursday, it's to-morrow that he hangs.  
I'll go now to the jail to see this boy."  
"He hangs at nine o'clock," said Dr. Burke.  
And Merival got up to go. The party  
Broke up, departed. At the jail he saw  
The wretched creature doomed to die. And turned  
Half sick from seeing how he tossed and looked  
With glassy eyes. The sheriff had gone out.  
And Merival could see him, get the case.  
Next afternoon they met, the sheriff told  
This story to the coroner.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

### CHARLES WARREN, THE SHERIFF

I have seen twenty men hanged, hung myself  
Two in this jail, with whom I talked the night  
Before they had the rope, knotted behind  
The ear to break the neck. These two I hanged,  
One guilty and defiant, taking chops,  
Four cups of coffee just an hour before  
We swung him off; the other trembling, pale,  
Protesting innocence, but guilty too —  
Both wore the same look in the middle watch.  
I tell you what it is: You take a steer,  
And windlass him to where the butcher stands  
With hammer ready for the blow and knife  
To slit the throat after the hammer falls,  
Well, there's a moment when the steer is standing  
Head, neck strained side-ways, eyes rolled side-ways too,  
Fixed, bright seen this way, but another way  
A film seems spreading on them. That's the look.  
They wear a corpse-like pallor, and their tongues  
Are loose, sprawl in their mouths, lie paralyzed  
Against their teeth, or fall back in their throats  
Which make them cough and stop for words and close  
Dry lips with little pops.

There's something else:  
Their minds are out of them, like a rubber band  
Stretched from the place it's pinned, about to break.  
And all the time they try to draw it back,

## CHARLES WARREN, THE SHERIFF

And give it utterance with that sprawling tongue,  
And lips too dry for words. They hold it tight  
As a woman giving birth holds to the sheet  
Tied to the bed's head, pulls the sheet to end  
The agony and the reluctance of the child  
That pauses, dreads to enter in this world.

So was it with Fred Taylor. But before  
The high Court shook his hope, he talked to me  
Freely and fully, saying many times  
What could the world expect of him beside  
Some violence or murder? He had borrowed  
The books his lawyers used to fight for him,  
And read for hours and days about heredity.  
And in our talks he said: mix red and violet,  
You have the color purple. Strike two notes,  
You have a certain chord, and nature made me  
By rules as mathematical as they use  
In mixing drugs or gases. Then he'd say:  
Look at this table, and he'd show to me  
A diagram of chickens, how blue fowls  
Come from a cross of black with one of white  
With black splashed feathers. Look at the blues, he'd say.  
They mate, and of four chickens, two are blue,  
And one is black and one is white. These blues  
Produce in that proportion. But the black  
And white have chickens white and black, you see  
In equal numbers. Don't you see that I  
Was caught in mathematics, jotted down  
Upon a slate before I came to earth?

## DOMESDAY BOOK

They could have picked my forbears; on a slate  
Forecast my soul, its tendencies, if they  
Had been that devilish. And so he talked.

Well, then he heard that Elenor Murray died,  
And told me that her grandmother, that woman  
Known for her queerness and her lively soul  
To eighty years and more, was grandmother  
To his father, and this Elenor Murray cousin  
To his father. There you have it, he exclaimed,  
She killed herself, and I know why, he said  
She loved someone. This love is in our blood,  
And overflows, or spurts between the logs  
You dam it with, or fully stayed grows green  
With summer scum, breeds frogs and spotted snakes.

He was a study and I studied him.  
I'd sit beside his cell and read some words  
From his confession, ask why did you this?  
His crime was monstrous, but he won me over.  
I wished to help the boy, for boy he was  
Just nineteen, and I pitied him. At last  
His story seemed as clear as when you see  
The truth behind poor words that say as much  
As words can say — you see, you get the truth  
And know it, even if you never pass  
The truth to others.

Lord! This girl he killed  
Knew not the power she played with. Why she sat

## CHARLES WARREN, THE SHERIFF

Like a child upon the asp's nest picking flowers.  
Or as a child will pet a mad dog. Look  
You come into my life, what do you bring?  
Why, everything that made your life, all pains,  
All raptures, disappointments, wisdom learned  
You bring to me. But do you show them, no!  
You hide them maybe, some of them, and leave  
Myself to learn you by the hardest means,  
And bing! A something in you, or in me,  
Out of a past explodes, or better still  
Extends a claw from out the buttoned coat  
And rips a face.

So this poor girl was killed,  
And by an innocent coquetry evoked  
The claw that tore her breast away.

One day  
As I passed by his cell I stopped and sat.  
What was the first thing entering in your mind  
From which you trace your act? And he said: "Well  
Almost from the beginning all my mind  
Was on her from the moment I awaked  
Until I slept, and often I awoke  
At two or three o'clock with thoughts of her.  
And through the day I thought of nothing else;  
Sometimes I could not eat. At school my thought  
Stretched out of me to her, could not be pulled  
Back to the lesson. I could read a page  
As it were Greek, not understand a word.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

But just the moment I was with her then  
My soul re-entered me, I was at peace,  
And happy, oh so happy! In the days  
When we were separated my unrest  
Took this form: that I must be with her, or  
If that could not be, then some other place  
Was better than the place I was — I strained,  
Lived in a constant strain, found no content  
With anything or place, could find no peace  
Except with her.”

“ Right from the first I had  
Two minds, two hearts concerning her, and one  
Was confidence, and one was doubt, one love,  
One hatred. And one purpose was to serve her,  
Guard her and care for her, one said destroy,  
Ruin or kill her. Sitting by her side,  
Except as I shall say I loved her, trusted her,  
Away from her, I doubted her and hated her.  
But at the dances when I saw her smile  
Up at another man, the storming blood  
Roared in my brain for wondering about  
The words they said. He might be holding her  
Too close to him; or as I watched I saw  
His knee indent her skirt between her knees,  
That might be when she smiled. Then going home  
I'd ask her what he said. She'd only smile  
And keep a silence that I could not open  
With any pry of questions.”

## CHARLES WARREN, THE SHERIFF

“ Well, we quarreled,  
About this boy she danced with. So I said:  
I'll leave her, never see her, I'll go find  
Another girl, forget her. Sunday next  
I saw her driving with this fellow. I  
Was walking in the road, they passed me laughing,  
She turned about and waved her hand at me.  
That night I lay awake and tossed and thought:  
Where are they now? What are they doing now?  
He's kissing her upon the lips I've kissed,  
Or worse, perhaps, I have been fooled, she lies  
Within his arms and gives him what for love  
I never asked her, never dared to ask.”  
This brought Fred Taylor's story to the murder,  
In point of madness, anyway. Some business  
Broke in our visit here. Another time  
I sat with him and questioned him again  
About the night he killed her.

“ Well,” he said,  
“ I told you that we quarreled. So I fought  
To free myself of thought of her — no use.  
I tried another girl, it wouldn't work.  
For at the dance I took this girl to, I  
Saw Gertrude with this fellow, and the madness  
Came over me in blackness, hurricanes,  
Until I found myself in front of her,  
Where she was seated, asking for a dance.  
She smiled and rose and danced with me. And then  
As the dance ended, May I come to see you,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

I'm sorry for my words, came from my tongue,  
In spite of will. She laughed and said to me:  
'If you'll behave yourself.'

“ I went to see her,  
But came away more wretched than I went.  
She seemed to have sweet secrets, in her silence  
And eyes too calm the secrets hid themselves.  
At first I could not summon up the strength  
To ask her questions, but at last I did.  
And then she only shook her head and laughed,  
And spoke of something else. She had a way  
Of mixing up the subjects, till my mind  
Forgot the very thing I wished to know,  
Or dulled its edges so, if I remembered  
I could not ask it so to bring the answer  
I wished from her. I came away so weak  
I scarce could walk, fell into sleep at once,  
But woke at three o'clock, and could not sleep.”

“ Before this quarrel we had been engaged  
And at this evening's end I brought it up:  
'What shall we do? Are you engaged to me?  
Will you renew it?' And she said to me:  
'We still are young, it's better to be free.  
Let's play and dance. Be gay, for if you will  
I'll go with you, but when you're gloomy, dear,  
You are not company for a girl.'”



## CHARLES WARREN, THE SHERIFF

“ Dear me!

Here was I five feet nine, and could have crushed  
Her little body with my giant arms.  
And yet in strength that counts, the mind that moves  
The body, but much more can move itself,  
And other minds, she was a spirit power,  
And I but just a derrick slowly swung  
By an engine smaller, noisy with its chug,  
And cloudy with its smoke bituminous.  
That night, however, she engaged to go  
To dance with me a week hence. But meanwhile  
The hellish thing comes, on the morning after.  
Thus chum of mine, who testified, John Luce  
Came to me with the story that this man  
That Gertrude danced with, told him — O my God —  
That Gertrude hinted she would come across,  
Give him the final bliss. That was the proof  
They brought out in the trial, as you know.  
The fellow said it, damn him — whether she  
Made such a promise, who knows? Would to God  
I knew before you hang me. There I stood  
And heard this story, felt my arteries  
Lock as you'd let canal gates down, my heart  
Beat for deliverance from the bolted streams.  
That night I could not sleep, but found a book,  
Just think of this for fate! Under my eyes  
There comes an ancient story out of Egypt:  
Thyamis fearing he would die and lose  
The lovely Chariclea, strikes her dead,  
Then kills himself, some thousands of years ago.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

It's all forgotten now, I say to self,  
Who cares, what matters it, the thing was done  
And served its end. The story stuck with me.  
But the next night and the next night I stole out  
To spy on Gertrude, by the path in the grass  
Lay for long hours. And on the third night saw  
At half-past eight or nine this fellow come  
And take her walking in the darkness — where?  
I could have touched them as they walked the path,  
But could not follow for the moon which rose.  
Besides I lost them.”

“ Well, the time approached  
Of the dance, and still I brooded, then resolved.  
My hatred now was level with the cauldron,  
With bubbles crackling. So the spade I took,  
Hidden beneath the seat may show forethought,  
They caught the jury with that argument,  
And forethought does it show, but who made me  
To have such forethought? ”

“ Then I called for her  
And took her to the dance. I was most gay,  
Because the load was lifted from my mind,  
And I had found relief. And so we danced.  
And she danced with this fellow. I was calm,  
Believed somehow he had not had her yet.  
And if his knee touched hers — why let it go.  
Nothing beyond shall happen, even this  
Shall not be any more.”

## CHARLES WARREN, THE SHERIFF

“ We started home.  
Before we reached that clump of woods I asked her  
If she would marry me. She laughed at me.  
I asked her if she loved that other man.  
She said you are a silly boy, and laughed.  
And then I asked her if she'd marry me,  
And if she would not, why she would not do it.  
We came up to the woods and she was silent,  
I could not make her speak. I stopped the horse.  
She sat all quiet, I could see her face  
Under the brilliance of the moon. I saw  
A thin smile on her face — and then I struck her,  
And from the floor grabbed up the iron wrench,  
And struck her, took her out and laid her down,  
And did what was too horrible, they say,  
To do and keep my life. To finish up  
I reached back for the iron wrench, first felt  
Her breast to find her heart, no use of wrench,  
She was already dead. I took the spade,  
Scraped off the leaves between two trees and dug,  
And buried her and said: ‘ My Chariclea  
No man shall have you.’ Then I drove till morning,  
And after some days reached Missouri, where  
They caught me.”

So Fred Taylor told me all,  
Filled in the full confession that he made,  
And which they used in court, with looks and words,  
Scarce to be reproduced; but to the last

## DOMESDAY BOOK

He said the mathematics of his birth  
Accounted for his deed.

Is it not true?

If you resolved the question that the jury  
Resolved, did he know right from wrong, did he  
Know what he did, the jury answered truly  
To give the rope to him. Or if you say  
These mathematics may be true, and still  
A man like that is better out of way,  
And saying so become the very spirit,  
And reason which slew Gertrude, disregarding  
The devil of heredity which clutched him,  
As he put by the reason we obey,  
It may be well enough, I do not know.

Now for last night before this morning fixed  
To swing him off. His lawyers went to see  
The governor to win reprieve, perhaps  
A commutation. I could see his eyes  
Had two lights in them; one was like a lantern  
With the globe greased, which showed he could not see  
Himself in death tomorrow — what is that  
In the soul that cannot see itself in death?  
No to-morrow, continuation, the wall, the end!  
And yet this very smear upon the globe  
Was death's half fleshless hand which rubbed across  
His senses and his hope. The other light  
Was weirdly bright for terror, expectation  
Of good news from the governor.

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## CHARLES WARREN, THE SHERIFF

For his lawyers  
Were in these hours petitioning. He would ask:  
"No news? No word? What is the time?" His  
tongue

Would fall back in his throat, we saw the strain  
Of his stretched soul. He'd sit upon his couch  
Hands clasped, head down. Arise and hold the bars,  
Himself fling on the couch face down and shake.  
But when he heard the hammers ring that nail  
The scaffold into shape, he whirled around  
Like a rat in a cage. And when the sand bag fell,  
That tested out the rope, a muffled thug,  
And the rope creaked, he started up and moaned  
"You're getting ready," and his body shivered,  
His white hands could not hold the bars, he reeled  
And fell upon the couch again.

### Suppose

There was no whiskey and no morphia,  
Except for what the parsons think fit use,  
A poor weak fellow — not a Socrates —  
Must march the gallows, walk with every nerve  
Up-bristled like a hair in fright. This night  
Was much too horrible for me. At last  
I had the doctor dope him unaware,  
And for a time he slept.

But when the dawn  
Looked through the little windows near the ceiling  
Cob-webbed and grimed, with light like sanded water,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And echoes started in the corridors  
Of feet and objects moved, then all at once  
He sprang up from his sleep, and gave a groan,  
Half yell, that shook us all.

A clergyman

Came soon to pray with him, and he grew calmer,  
And said: "O pray for her, but pray for me  
That I may see her, when this riddle-world  
No longer stands between us, slipped from her  
And soon from me."

For breakfast he took coffee,

A piece of toast, no more. The sickening hour  
Approaches — he is sitting on his couch,  
Bent over, head in hands, dazed, or in prayer.  
My deputy reads the warrant — while I stand  
At one side so to hear, but not to see.  
And then my clerk comes quickly through the door  
That opens from the office in the jail;  
Runs up the iron steps, all out of breath,  
And almost shouts: "The governor telephones  
To stop; the sentence is commuted." Then  
I grew as weak as the culprit — took the warrant,  
And stepped up to the cell's door, coughed, inhaled,  
And after getting breath I said: "Good news,  
The governor has saved you."

Then he laughed,

Half fell against the bars, and like a rag  
Sank in a heap.

## CHARLES WARREN, THE SHERIFF

I don't know to this day  
What moved the governor. For crazy men  
Are hanged sometimes. To-day he leaves the jail.  
We take him where the criminal insane  
Are housed at our expense.

---

So Merival heard the sheriff. As he knew  
The governor's mind, and how the governor  
Gave heed to public thought, or what is deemed  
The public thought, what's printed in the press,  
He wondered at the governor. For no crime  
Had stirred the county like this crime. And if  
A jury and the courts adjudged this boy  
Of nineteen in his mind, what was the right  
Of interference by the governor?  
So Merival was puzzled. They were chums,  
The governor and Merival in old days.  
Had known club-life together, ate and drank  
Together in the days when Merival  
Came to Chicago living down the hurt  
He took from her who left him. In those days  
The governor was struggling, Merival  
Had helped with friends and purse — and later helped  
The governor's ambition from the time  
He went to congress. So the two were friends  
With memories and secrets for the stuff  
Of friendship, glad renewal of the surge  
Of lasting friendship when they met.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And now

He sensed a secret, meant to bring it forth.  
And telegraphed the governor, who said:  
"I'll see you in Chicago." Merival  
Went up to see the governor and talk.  
They had not met for months for leisured talk.  
And now the governor said: "I'll tell you all,  
And make it like a drama. I'll bring in  
My wife who figured in this murder case.  
It was this way: It's nearly one o'clock,  
I'm back from hearing lawyers plead. I wish  
To make this vivid so you'll get my mind.  
I tell you what I said to her. It's this:"

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### THE GOVERNOR

I'm home at last. How long were you asleep?  
I startled you. The time? It's midnight past.  
Put on your slippers and your robe, my dear,  
And make some coffee for me — what a night!  
Yes, tell you? I shall tell you everything.  
I must tell someone, and a wife should know  
The workings of a governor's mind — no one  
Could guess what turned the scale to save this man  
Who would have died to-morrow, but for me.  
That's fine. This coffee helps me. As I said  
This night has been a trial. Well, you know  
I told these lawyers they could come at eight,



## THE GOVERNOR

And so they came. A seasoned lawyer one,  
The other young and radical, both full  
Of sentiment of some sort. And there you sit,  
And do not say a word of disapproval.  
You smile, which means you sun yourself within  
The power I have, and yet do you approve?  
This man committed brutal murder, did  
A nameless horror; now he's saved from death.  
The father and the mother of the girl,  
The neighborhood, perhaps, in which she lived  
Will roar against me, think that I was bought,  
Or used by someone I'm indebted to  
In politics. Oh no! It's really funny,  
Since it is simpler than such things as these.  
And no one, saving you, shall know the secret.  
For there I sat and didn't say a word  
To indicate, betray my thought; not when  
The thing came out that moved me. Let them read  
The doctor's affidavits, that this man  
Was crazy when he killed the girl, and read  
The transcript of the evidence on the trial.  
They read and talked. At last the younger lawyer,  
For sometime still, kept silent by the other,  
Pops out with something, reads an affidavit,  
As foreign to the matter as a story  
Of melodrama color on the screen,  
Which still contained a sentence that went home;  
I felt my mind turn like a turn-table,  
And click as when the switchman kicks the tongue  
Of steel into the slot that holds the table.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And from my mind the engine, that's the problem,  
Puffed, puffed and moved away, out on the track,  
And disappeared upon its business. How  
Is that for metaphor? Your coffee, dear,  
Stirs up my fancy. But to tell the rest,  
If my face changed expression, or my eye  
Betrayed my thought, then I have no control  
Of outward seemi.ig. For they argued on  
An hour or so thereafter. And I asked  
Re-reading of the transcript where this man  
Told of his maniac passion, of the night  
He killed the girl, the doctors' testimony  
I had re-read, and let these lawyers think  
My interest centered there, and my decision  
Was based upon such matters, and at last  
The penalty commuted. When in truth  
I tell you I had let the fellow hang  
For all of this, except that I took fire  
Because of something in this affidavit  
Irrelevant to the issue, reaching me  
In something only relevant to me.  
O, well, all life is such. Our great decisions  
Flame out of sparks, where roaring fires before,  
Not touching our combustibles wholly failed  
To flame or light us.

Now the secret hear.

Do you remember all the books I read  
Two years ago upon heredity,  
Foot-notes to evolution, the dynamics

## THE GOVERNOR

Of living matter? Well, it wasn't that  
That made me save this fellow. There you smile  
For knowing how and when I got these books,  
Who woke my interest in them. Never mind,  
You don't know yet my reasons.

But I'll tell you :

And let you see a governor's mind at work.  
When this young lawyer in this affidavit  
Read to a certain place my mind strayed off  
And lived a time past, you were present too.  
It was that morning when I passed my crisis,  
Had just dodged death, could scarcely speak, too weak  
To lift a hand to feed myself, but needed  
Vital replenishment of strength, and then  
I got it in a bowl of oyster soup,  
Rich cream at that. And as I live, my dear,  
As this young lawyer read, I felt myself  
In bed as I lay then, re-lived the weakness,  
Could see the spoon that carried to my mouth  
The appetizing soup, imagined there  
The feelings I had then of getting fingers  
Upon the rail of life again, how faint,  
But with such clear degrees. Could see the hand  
That held the spoon, the eyes that looked at me  
In triumph for the victory of my strength,  
Which battled, almost lost the prize of life.  
It all came over me when this lawyer read:  
Elenor Murray lately come from France  
Found dead beside the river, was the cousin

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Of this Fred Taylor, and had planned to come  
To see the governor, death prevented her —  
Suppose it had?

That affidavit, doubtless  
Was read to me to move me for the fact  
This man was kindred to a woman who  
Served in the war, this lawyer was that cheap!  
And isn't it as cheap to think that I  
Could be persuaded by the circumstance  
That Elenor Murray, she who nursed me once,  
Was cousin to this fellow, if this lawyer  
Knew this, and did he know it? I don't know.  
Had Elenor Murray lived she would have come  
To ask her cousin's life — I know her heart.  
And at the last, I think this was the thing:  
I thought I'd do exactly what I'd do  
If she had lived and asked me, disregard  
Her death, and act as if she lived, repay  
Her dead hands, which in life had saved my life.

Now, dear, your eyes have tears — I know — believe me,  
I had no romance with this Elenor Murray.  
Good Lord, it's one o'clock, I must to bed. . . .

You get my story Merival? Do you think,  
A softness in the heart went to the brain  
And softened that? Well now I stress two things:  
I can't endure defeat, nor bear to see  
An ardent spirit thwarted. What I've achieved  
Has been through will that would not bend, and so

## THE GOVERNOR

To see that in another wins my love,  
And my support. Now take this Elenor Murray  
She had a will like mine, she worked her way  
As I have done. And just to hear that she  
Had planned to see me, ask for clemency  
For this condemned degenerate, made me say  
Shall I let death defeat her? Take the breach  
And make her death no matter in my course?  
For as I live if she had come to me  
I had done that I did. And why was that?  
No romance! Never that! Yet human love  
As friend can keep for friend in this our life  
I felt for Elenor Murray — and for this:  
It was her will that would not take defeat,  
Devotion to her work, and in my case  
This depth of friendship welling in her heart  
For human beings, that I shared in — there  
Gave tireless healing to her nursing hands  
And saved my life. And for a life a life.  
This criminal will live some years, we'll say,  
Were better dead. All right. He'll cost the state  
Say twenty thousand dollars. What is that  
Contrasted with the cost to me, if I  
Had let him hang? There is a bank account,  
Economies in the realm of thought to watch.  
And don't you think the souls — let's call them souls —  
Of these avenging, law abiding folk,  
These souls of the community all in all  
Will be improved for hearing that I did  
A human thing, and profit more therefrom

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Than though that sense of balance in their souls  
Struck for the thought of crime avenged, the law  
Fulfilled and vindicated? Yes, it's true.  
And Merival spoke up and said: "It's true,  
I understand your story, and I'm glad.  
It's like you and I'll tell my jury first,  
And they will scatter it, what moved in you  
And how this Elenor Murray saved a life."

---

The talk of waste in human life was constant  
As Coroner Merival took evidence  
At Elenor Murray's inquest. Everyone  
Could think of waste in some one's life as well  
As in his own.

John Scofield knew the girl,  
Had worked for Arthur Fouche, her grandfather,  
And knew what course his life took, how his fortune  
Was wasted, dwindled down.

Remembering  
A talk he heard between this Elenor Murray  
And Arthur Fouche, her grandfather, he spoke  
To Coroner Merival on the street one day:

---

## JOHN SCOFIELD

You see I worked for Arthur Fouche, he said,  
Until the year before he died; I knew

## JOHN SCOFIELD

That worthless son of his who lived with him,  
Born when his mother was past bearing time,  
So born a weakling. When he came from college  
He married soon and came to mother's hearth,  
And brought his bride. I heard the old man say:  
"A man should have his own place when he marries,  
Not settle in the family nest"; I heard  
The old man offer him a place, or offer  
To buy a place for him. This baby boy  
Ran quick to mother, cried and asked to stay.  
What happened then? What always happens. Soon  
This son began to edge upon the father,  
And take the reins a little, Arthur Fouche  
Was growing old. And at the last the son  
Controlled the bank account and ran the farms;  
And Mrs. Fouche gave up her place at table  
To daughter-in-law, no longer served or poured  
The coffee — so you see how humble beggars  
Become the masters, it is always so.  
Now this I know: When this boy came from school  
And brought his wife back to the family place,  
Old Arthur Fouche had twenty thousand dollars  
On saving in the bank, and lots of money  
Loaned out on mortgages. But when he died  
He owed two thousand dollars at the bank.  
Where did the money go? Why, for ten years  
When Arthur Fouche and son were partners, I  
Saw what went on, and saw this boy buy cattle  
When beef was high, sell cattle when it was low,  
And lose each year a little. And I saw

## DOMESDAY BOOK

This boy buy buggies, autos and machinery,  
And lose the money trading. So it was,  
This worthless boy had nothing in his head  
To run a business, which used up the fortune  
Of Arthur Fouche, and strangled Arthur Fouche,  
As vines destroy an oak tree. Well, you know  
When Arthur Fouche's will was opened up  
They found this son was willed most everything —  
It's always so. The children who go out,  
And make their way get nothing, and the son  
Who stays at home by mother gets the swag.  
And so this son was willed the family place  
And sold it to that chiropractor — left  
For California to remake his life,  
And died there, after wasting all his life,  
His father's fortune, too.

So, now to show you  
How age breaks down a mind and dulls a heart,  
I'll tell you what I heard:

This Elenor Murray  
Was eighteen, just from High School, and one day  
She came to see her grandfather and talked.  
The old man always said he loved her most  
Of all the grandchildren, and Mrs. Fouche  
Told me a dozen times she thought as much  
Of Elenor Murray as she did of any  
Child of her own. Too bad they didn't show  
Their love for her.



## JOHN SCOFIELD

I was in and out the room  
Where Elenor Murray and her grandfather  
Were talking on that day, was planing doors  
That swelled and wouldn't close. There was no secret  
About this talk of theirs that I could see,  
And so I listened.

Elenor began:

“ If you can help me, grandpa, just a little  
I can go through the university.  
I can teach school in summer and can save  
A little money by denying self.  
If you can let me have two hundred dollars,  
When school begins each year, divide it up,  
If you prefer, and give me half in the fall,  
And half in March, perhaps, I can get through.  
And when I finish I shall go to work  
And pay you back, I want it as a loan,  
And do not ask it for a gift.” She sat,  
And fingered at her dress while asking him,  
And Arthur Fouche looked at her. Come to think  
He was toward eighty then. At last he said:  
“ I wish I could do what you ask me, Elenor,  
But there are several things. You see, my child,  
I have been through this thing of educating  
A family of children, lived my life  
In that regard, and so have done my part.  
I sent your mother to St. Mary's, sent  
The rest of them wherever they desired.  
And that's what every father owes his children.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And when he does it, he has done his duty.  
I'm sorry that your father cannot help you,  
And I would help you, though I've done my duty  
By those to whom I owed it; but you see  
Your uncle and myself are partners buying  
And selling cattle, and the business lags.  
We do not profit much, and all the money  
I have in bank is needed for this business.  
We buy the cattle, and we buy the corn,  
Then we run short of corn; and now and then  
I have to ask the bank to lend us money,  
And give my note. Last month I borrowed money!"  
And so the old man talked. And as I looked  
I saw the tears run down her cheeks. She sat  
And looked as if she didn't believe him.

No,

Why should she? For I do not understand  
Why in a case like this, a man who's worth,  
Say fifty thousand dollars couldn't spare  
Two hundred dollars by the year. Let's see:  
He might have bought less corn or cattle, gambled  
On lucky sales of cattle — there's a way  
To do a big thing when you have the eyes  
To see how big it is; and as for me,  
If money must be lost, I'd rather lose it  
On Elenor Murray than on cattle. In fact,  
That's where the money went, as I have said.  
And Elenor Murray went away and earned  
Two terms at college, and this worthless son

## GOTTLIEB GERALD

Ate up and spent the money. All of them,  
The son and Arthur Fouche and Elenor Murray  
Are gone to dust, now, like the garden things  
That sprout up, fall and rot.

At times it seems

All waste to me, no matter what you do  
For self or others, unless you think of turnips  
Which can't be much to turnips, but are good  
For us who raise them. Here's my story then,  
Good wishes to you, Coroner Merival.

---

Coroner Merival heard that Gottlieb Gerald  
Knew Elenor Murray and her family life;  
And knew her love for music, how she tried  
To play on the piano. On an evening  
He went with Winthrop Marion to the place,—  
Llewellyn George dropped in to hear, as well—  
Where Gottlieb Gerald sold pianos—dreamed,  
Read Kant at times, a scholar, but a failure,  
His life a waste in business. Gottlieb Gerald  
Spoke to them in these words:—

---

## GOTTLIEB GERALD

I knew her, why of course. And you want me?  
What can I say? I don't know how she died.  
I know what people say. But if you want

## DOMESDAY BOOK

To hear about her, as I knew the girl,  
Sit down a minute. Wait, a customer! . . .  
It was a fellow with a bill, these fellows  
Who come for money make me smile. Good God!  
Where shall I get the money, when pianos,  
Such as I make, are devilish hard to sell?  
Now listen to this tune! Dumm, dumm, dumm, dumm,  
How's that for quality, sweet clear and pure?  
Now listen to these chords I take from Bach!  
Oh no, I never played much, just for self.  
Well, you might say my passion for this work  
Is due to this: I pick the wire strings,  
The spruce boards and all that for instruments  
That suit my ear at last. When I have built  
A piano, then I sit and play upon it,  
And find forgetfulness and rapture through it.  
And well I need forgetfulness, for the bills  
Are never paid, collectors always come.  
I keep a little lawyer almost busy,  
Lest some one get a judgment, levy a writ  
Upon my prizes here, this one in chief.  
Oh, well, I pay at last, I always pay,  
But I must have my time. And in the days  
When these collectors swarm too much I find  
Oblivion in music, run my hands  
Over the keys I've tuned. I wish I had  
Some life of Cristofori, just to see  
If he was dodging bills when tuning strings.  
Perhaps that Silberman who made pianos  
For Frederick the Great had money enough,

## GOTTLIEB GERALD

And needed no oblivion from bills.  
You see I'm getting old now, sixty-eight;  
And this I say, that life is far too short  
For man to use his conquests and his wisdoms.  
This spirit, mind, is a machine, piano,  
And has its laws of harmony and use.  
Well, it seems funny that a man just learns  
The secrets of his being, how to love,  
How to forget, what to select, what life  
Is natural to him, and only living  
According to one's nature is increase —  
All else is waste — when wind blows on your back,  
Just as I sit sometimes when these collectors  
Come in on me — and so you find it's Death,  
Who levies on your life; no little lawyer  
Can keep him off with stays of execution,  
Or supersedeas, I think it is.  
Well, as I said, a man must live his nature,  
And dump the rules; this Christianity  
Makes people wear steel corsets to grow straight,  
And they don't grow so, for they scarcely breathe,  
They're laced so tight; and all their vital organs  
Are piled up and repressed until they groan.  
Then what? They lace up tighter, till the blood  
Stops in the veins and numbness comes upon them.  
Oblivion it may be — but give me music!

Oh yes, this girl, Elenor Murray, well  
This talk about her home is half and half,  
Part true, part false. Her daddy nips a little,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Has always done so. Like myself, the bills  
Have always deviled him. But just the same  
That home was not so bad. Some years ago,  
She was a little girl of thirteen maybe,  
Her father rented one of my pianos  
For Elenor to learn on, and of course  
The rent was always back, I didn't care,  
Except for my collectors, and besides  
She was so nice. So music hungry, practiced  
So hard to learn, I used to let the rent  
Run just as long as I could let it run.  
And even then I used to feel ashamed  
To ask her father for it.

As I said

She was thirteen, and one Thanksgiving day  
They asked me there to dinner, and I went,  
Brushed off my other coat and shaved myself,  
I looked all right, my shoes were polished too.  
You'd never think I polished them to look  
At these to-day. And now I tell you what  
I saw myself: nice linen on the table,  
And pretty silver, plated, I suppose;  
Good glass-ware, and a dinner that was splendid,  
Wine made from wild grapes spiced with cinnamon,  
It had a kick, too. And the home was furnished  
Like what you'd think: good carpets, chairs, a lounge,  
Some pictures on the wall — all good enough.  
And this girl was as lively as a cricket,  
She was the liveliest thing I ever saw;

## GOTTLIEB GERALD

And that's what ailed her, if you want my word.  
She had more life than she knew how to use,  
And had not learned her own machine.

And after

We had the dinner we came in the parlor.  
And then her mother asked her to play something,  
And she sat down and played tra-la; tra-la,  
One of these waltzes, I remember now  
As pretty as these verses in the paper  
On love, or something sentimental. Yes,  
She played it well. For I had rented them  
One of my pets. They asked me then to play  
And I tried out some Bach and other things,  
And improvised. And Elenor stood by,  
And asked what's that when I was improvising.  
I laughed and said, Sonata of Starved Rock,  
Or Deer Park Glen in Winter, anything —  
She looked at me with eyes as big as that.

Well, as I said, the home was good enough.  
Still like myself with these collectors, Elenor  
Was bothered, drawn aside, and scratched no doubt  
From walking through the briars. Just the same  
The trouble with her life, if it was trouble,  
And no musician would regard it trouble,  
The trouble was her nature strove to be  
All fire, and subtilize to the essence of fire,  
Which was her nature's law, and Nature's law,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The only normal law, as I have found;  
For so Canudo says, as I read lately,  
Who gave me words for what I knew from life.

Now if you want my theories I go on.  
You do? All right. What was this Elenor Murray?  
She was the lover, do you understand?  
She had her lovers maybe, I don't know,  
That's not the point with lovers, any more,  
Than it's the point to have pianos — no!  
Lovers, pianos are the self-same thing;  
Instruments for the soul, the source of fire,  
The crucible for flames that turn from red  
To blue, then white, then fierce transparencies.  
Then if the lover be not known by lovers  
How is she known? Why think of Elenor Murray,  
Who tries all things and educates herself,  
Goes traveling, would sing and play, becomes  
A member of a church with ritual, music,  
Incense and color, things that steal the senses,  
And bring oblivion. Don't you see the girl  
Moving her soul to find her soul, and passing  
Through loves and hatreds, seeking everywhere  
Herself she loved, in others, agonizing  
For hate of father, so they tell me now?  
But first because she hated in herself  
What lineaments of her father she saw in self.  
And all the while, I think, she strove to conquer  
This hatred, every hatred, sensing freedom  
For her own soul through liberating self



## GOTTLIEB GERALD

From hatreds. So, you see how someone near,  
Repugnant, disesteemed, may furnish strength  
And vision, too, by gazing on that one  
From day to day, not to be like that one:  
And so our hatreds help us, those we hate  
Become our saviors.

Here's the problem now  
In finding self, the soul — it's with ourselves,  
Within ourselves throughout the ticklish quest  
From first to last, and lovers and pianos  
Are instruments of salvation, yet they take  
The self but to the self, and say now find,  
Explore and know. And then, as all before,  
The problem is how much of mind to use,  
How much of instinct, phototropic sense,  
That turns instinctively to light — green worms  
More plant than animal are eyes all over  
Because their bodies know the light, no eyes  
Where sight is centralized. I've found it now:  
What is the intellect but eyes, where sight  
Is gathered in two spheres? The more they're used  
The darker is the body of the soul.  
Now to digress, that's why the Germans lost,  
They used the intellect too much; they took  
The sea of life and tried to dam it in,  
Or use it for canals or water power,  
Or make a card-case system of it, maybe,  
To keep collectors off, have all run smoothly,  
And make a sure thing of it.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

To return  
How much did Elenor Murray use her mind,  
How much her instincts, leave herself alone  
Let nature have its way? I think I know:

But first you have the artist soul; and next  
The soul half artist, prisoned usually  
In limitations where the soul, half artist  
Between depressions and discouragements  
Rises in hope and knocks. Why, I can tell them  
The moment they touch keys or talk to me.  
I hear their knuckles knocking on the walls,  
Insuperable partitions made of wood,  
When seeking tones or words; they have the hint,  
But cannot open, manifest themselves.  
So was it with this girl, she was all lover,  
Half artist, what a torture for a soul,  
And what escape for her! She could not play,  
Had never played, no matter what the chance.  
I think there is no curse like being dumb  
When every waking moment, every dream  
Keeps crying to speak out. This is her case:  
The girl was dumb, like that dumb woman here  
Whose dress caught fire, and in the dining room  
Was burned to death while all her family  
Were in the house, to whom she could not cry!

You asked about her going to the war,  
Her sacrifice in that, and if I think  
She found expression there — yes, of a kind,

## GOTTLIEB GERALD

But not the kind she hungered for, not music.  
She found adventure there, excitement too.  
That uses up the soul's power, takes the place  
Of better self-expression. But you see  
I do not think self-immolation life,  
I know it to be death. Now, look a minute:  
Why did she join the church? why to forget!  
Why did she go to war? why to forget.  
And at the last, this thing called sacrifice  
Rose up with meaning in her eyes. You see  
They tell around here now she often said:  
"I'm going to the war to be swept under."  
Now comes your Christian idea: Let me die,  
But die in service of the race, in giving  
I waste myself for others, give myself!  
Let God take notice, and reward the gift!  
This is the failure's recourse often-times,  
A prodigal flinging of the self — let God  
Find what He can of good, or find all good.  
I have abandoned all control, all thought  
Of finding my soul otherwise, if here  
I find my soul, a doubt that makes the gift  
Not less abandoned.

This is foolish talk

I know you think, I think it is myself,  
At least in part. I know I'm right, however,  
In guessing off the reason of her failure,  
If failure it is. But pshaw, why talk of failure  
About a woman born to live the life

## DOMESDAY BOOK

She lived, which could not have been different,  
Much different under any circumstance?  
She might have married, had a home and children,  
What of it? As it is she makes a story,  
A flute sound in our symphony — all right!  
And I confess, in spite of all I've said,  
The profit, the success, may not be known  
To any but one's self. Now look at me,  
By all accounts I am a failure — look!  
For forty years just making poor ends meet,  
My love all spent in making good pianos.  
I thrill all over picking spruce and wires,  
And putting them together — all my love  
Gone into this, no head at all for business.  
I keep no books, they cheat me out of rent.  
I don't know how to sell pianos, when  
I sell one I have trouble oftentimes  
In getting pay for it. But just the same  
I sit here with myself, I know myself,  
I've found myself, and when collectors come  
I can say come to-morrow, turn about,  
And run the scale, or improvise, and smile,  
Forget the world!

---

The three arose and left.

Llewellyn George said: "That's a rarity,  
That man is like a precious flower you find  
Way off among the weeds and rocky soil,  
Grown from a seed blown out of paradise;  
I want to call again."

## LILLI ALM

So thus they knew  
This much of Elenor Murray's music life.  
But on a day a party talk at tea,  
Of Elenor Murray and her singing voice  
And how she tried to train it — just a riddle  
Which passed unknown of Merival. For you know  
Your name may come up in a thousand places  
At earth's ends, though you live, and do not die  
And make a great sensation for a day.  
And all unknown to Merival for good  
This talk of Lilli Alm and Ludwig Haibt:

---

## LILLI ALM

In Lola Schaefer's studio in the Tower,  
Tea being served to painters, poets, singers,  
Herr Ludwig Haibt, a none too welcome guest,  
Of vital body, brisk, too loud of voice,  
And Lilli Alm crossed swords.

It came about  
When Ludwig Haibt said: "Have you read the papers  
About this Elenor Murray?" And then said:  
"I tried to train her voice — she was a failure."  
And Lilli Alm who taught the art of song  
Looked at him half contemptuous and said:  
"Why did she fail?" To which Herr Ludwig answered  
"She tried too hard. She made her throat too tense,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And made its muscles stiff by too much thought,  
Anxiety for song, the vocal triumph."

"O, yes, I understand," said Lilli Alm.  
Then stabbing him she added, "since you dropped  
The Perfect Institute, and dropped the idea  
Which stresses training muscles of the tongue,  
And all that thing, be fair and shoulder half  
The failure of poor Elenor Murray on  
Your system's failure. For I chanced to know  
The girl myself. She started work with me,  
And I am sure that if I had been able—  
With time enough I could have done it too—  
To rid her mind of muscles and to fix  
The thought alone of music in her mind,  
She would have sung. Now listen, Ludwig Haibt,  
You've come around to see that song's the thing.  
I take a pupil and I say to her:  
The mind must fix itself on music, say  
I would make song, pure tones and beautiful;  
That comes from spirit, from the Plato rapture,  
Which gets the idea. It is well to know  
Some physiology, I grant, to know  
When, how to move the vocal organs, feel  
How they are moving, through the ear to place  
These organs in relation, and to know  
The soft palate is drawn against the hard;  
The tongue can take positions numerous,  
Can be used at the root, a throaty voice;  
Or with the tip, produce expressiveness.

## LILLI ALM

But what must we avoid? — rigidity.  
And if that girl was over-zealous, then  
So much the more her teaching should have kept  
Mind off the larynx and the tongue, and fixed  
Upon the spiritual matters, so to give  
The snake-like power of loosening, contracting  
The muscles used for singing. Ludwig Haibt,  
I can forgive your system, since abandoned,  
I can't forgive your words to-day who say  
This woman failed for trying over much,  
When I know that your system made her throw  
An energy truly wonderful on muscles;  
And when I think of your book where you said:  
The singing voice is the result, observe  
Of physical conditions, like the strings  
Or tubes of brass. While granting that it's well  
To know the art of tuning up the strings,  
And how to place them; after all the art  
Of tuning and of placing comes from mind,  
The idea, and the art of making song  
Is just the breathing of the perfect spirit  
Upon the strings. The throat is but the leaves,  
Let them be flexible, the mouth's the flower,  
The tone the perfume. And your olden way  
Of harping on the larynx — well, since you  
Turned from it, I'm ungenerous perhaps  
To scold you thus to-day.

But this I say,  
Let us be frank as teachers: Take the fetish

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Of breathing and see how you cripple talent,  
Or take that matter of the laryngoscope,  
Whereby you photograph a singer's throat,  
Caruso's, Galli Curci's at the moment  
Of greatest beauty in song, and thus preserve  
In photographs before you how the muscles  
Looked and were placed that moment. Then attempt  
To get the like effect by placing them  
In similar fashion. Oh, you know, Herr Ludwig,  
These fetiches go by. One thing remains:  
The idea in the soul of beauty, music,  
The hope to give it forth.

Alas! to think  
So many souls are wasted while we teach  
This thing or that. The strong survive, of course.  
But take this Elenor Murray — why, that girl  
Was just a flame, I never saw such hunger  
For self-development, and beauty, richness,  
In all experience in life — I knew her,  
That's why I say so — take her as I say,  
And put her to a practice — yours we'll say —  
Where this great zeal she had is turned and pressed  
Upon the physical, just the very thing  
To make her throat constrict, and fill her up  
With over anxiety and make her fail.  
When had she come to me at first this passion  
Directed to the beauty, the idea  
Had put her soul at ease to ease her body,



## LILLI ALM

Which gradually and beautifully had answered  
That flame of hers.

Well, Ludwig Haibt, you're punished  
For wasting several years upon a system  
Since put away as half erroneous,  
If not quite worthless. But I must confess,  
Since I have censured you, to my own sin.  
This girl ran out of money, came to me  
And told me so. To which I said: "Too bad,  
You will have money later, when you do,  
Come back to me." She stood a silent moment,  
Her hand upon the knob, I saw her tears,  
Just little dim tears, then she said good-bye  
And vanished from me.

Well, I now repent.  
I who have thought of beauty all my life,  
And taught the art of sound made beautiful,  
Let slip a chance for beauty — why, I think,  
A beauty just as great as song! You see  
I had a chance to serve a hungry soul —  
I could have said just let the money go,  
Or let it go until you get the money.  
I let that chance for beauty slip. Even now  
I see poor Elenor Murray at the door,  
Who paused, no doubt, in hope that I would say  
What I thought not to say.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

So, Ludwig Haibt,

We are a poor lot — let us have some tea!  
“ We are a poor lot,” Ludwig Haibt replied.  
“ But since this is confessional, I absolve you,  
If you'll permit me, from your sin. Will you  
Absolve me, if I say I'm sorry too?  
I'll tell you something, it is really true: —  
I changed my system more I think because  
Of what I learned from teaching Elenor Murray  
Than on account of any other person.  
She demonstrated better where my system  
Was lacking than all pupils that I had.  
And so I changed it; and of course I say  
The thing is music, just as poets say  
The thing is beauty, not the rhyme and words,  
With which they bring it, instruments that's all,  
And not the thing — but beauty.”

So they talked,

Forgave each other. And that very day  
Two priests were talking of confessionals  
A mile or so from the Tower, where Lilli Alm  
And Ludwig Haibt were having tea. You say  
The coroner was ignorant of this!  
What is the part it plays with Elenor Murray?  
Or with the inquest? Wait a little yet  
And see if Merival has told to him  
What thing of value touching Elenor Murray  
Is lodged in Father Whimsett's heart or words.

## FATHER WHIMSETT

### FATHER WHIMSETT

Looking like Raphael's Perugino, eyes  
So slightly, subtly aquiline, as brown  
As a buck-eye, amorous, flamed, but lightly dimmed  
Through thought of self while sitting for the artist;  
A nose well bridged with bone for will, the nostrils  
Distended as if sniffing diaphanous fire;  
A very bow for lips, the under lip  
Rich, kissable like a woman's; heavy cheeks  
Propped with a rounded tower of flesh for neck:  
Thus Perugino looked, says Raphael,  
And thus looked Father Whimsett at his desk,  
With vertical creases, where the nose and brow  
Together come, between the eye-brows slanting  
Unequally, half clown-wise, half Mephisto,  
With just a touch of that abandoned humor,  
And laughter at the world, the race of men,  
Mephisto had for mischief, which the priest  
Has for a sense which looks upon the dream  
And smiles, yet pities those who move in it.  
And Father Whimsett smokes and reads and smiles.  
He soon will hold confessional. For days  
He has heard nothing but complaints of lovers,  
And searched for nullities, impediments,  
Through which to give sore stricken hearts relief:  
There was the youth too drunk to know he married  
A woman never baptized. Now the youth  
Has found another — oh this is the one!

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And comes and says: Oh, holy father, help me,  
May I be free to marry her I love,  
And get the church's blessing when a court  
Dissolves the civil contract? Holy Father,  
I knew not what I did, cannot remember  
Where I was married, when, my mind's a blank —  
It was the drink, you know.

And so it goes,  
The will is eyeless through concupiscence,  
And that absolves the soul that's penitent.  
And Father Whimsett reads his Latin books,  
Searches for subtleties for faithful souls,  
Whereby the faithful souls may have their wish,  
Yet keep the gospel, too.

These Latin books  
Leave him fatigued, but not fatigued to turn  
Plotinus, Xenophon, Boccacio,  
Ars Amatoria and Remedia Amoris.  
And just this moment Father Whimsett reads  
Catullus, killing time, before he hears  
Confession, gets the music of Catullus  
Along the light that enters at the eye:  
Ethereal strings plucked by the intellect  
To vibrate to the inner ear. At times  
He must re-light his half-forgot cigar.  
And while the music of the Latin verse,  
Which is an echo, as he stops to light  
His half-forgot cigar, is wafted through

## FATHER WHIMSETT

His meditation, as a tune is heard  
After the keys are stayed, it blends, becomes  
The soul, interpretation of these stories,  
Which lovers tell him in these later days.  
And now the clock upon the mantel chimes  
The quarter of the hour. Up goes Catullus  
By Ovid on the shelf. The dead cigar  
Is thrown away. He rises from the chair —  
When Father Conway enters, just to visit  
Some idle moments, smoke and have a talk.  
And Father Whimsett takes his seat again,  
Waves Father Conway to a comfort chair,  
Says "Have a smoke," and Father Conway smokes,  
And sees Catullus, says you read Catullus,  
And lays the morning *Times* upon the table,  
And says to Father Whimsett: "Every day  
The *Times* has stories better than Catullus,  
And episodes which Horace would have used.  
I wish we had a poet who would take  
This city of Chicago, write it up,  
The old Chicago, and the new Chicago,  
The race track, old cafés and gambling places,  
The prize fights, wrestling matches, sporting houses,  
As Horace wrote up Rome. Or if we had  
A Virgil he would find an epic theme  
In this American matter, typical  
Of our America, one phase or more  
Concerning Elenor Murray. Here to-day  
There is a story, of some letters found  
In Arthur Fouche's mansion, under the floor,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Sensational, dramatic.

Father Whimsett

Looked steadily at Father Conway, blew  
A funnel of tobacco smoke and said:  
I scarcely read the *Times* these days, too busy —  
I've had a run of rich confessionals.  
The war is ended, but they still come on,  
And most are lovers in the coils of love.  
I had one yesterday that made me think  
Of one I had a year ago last spring,  
The point was this: they say forgive me father,  
For I have sinned, then as the case proceeds  
A greater sin comes forth, I mean the sin  
Of saying sin is good, cannot be sin:  
I loved the man, or how can love be sin?  
Well, as a human soul I see the point,  
But have no option, must lay to and say  
Acknowledgment, contrition and the promise  
To sin no more, is necessary to  
Win absolution. Now to show the matter,  
Here comes a woman, says I leave for France  
To serve, to die. I have a premonition  
That I shall die abroad; or if I live,  
I have had fears, I shall be taken, wronged,  
So driven by this honor to destroy  
Myself, goes on and says, I tell you all  
These fears of mine that you may search my heart,  
More gladly may absolve me. Then she says,  
These fears worked in my soul until I took

## FATHER WHIMSETT

The step which I confess, before I leave.  
I wait and she proceeds :

“ O, holy father,  
There is a man whom I have loved for years,  
These five years past, such hopeless, happy years.  
I love him and he loves me, holy father.  
He holds me sacred as his wife, he loves me  
With the most holy love. It cannot be  
That any love like ours is guilty love,  
Can have no other quality than good,  
If it be love.”

Well, here's a pretty soul  
To sit in the confessional! So I say,  
Why do you come to me? Loving your sin,  
Confessing it, denying it in one breath,  
Leaves you in sin without forgiveness.  
Well, then she tacks about and says “ I sinned,  
And I am sorry. Wait a minute, father,  
And see the flesh and spirit mixed again.”  
She wants to tell me all, I let her go.  
And so she says: “ His wife's an invalid,  
Has been no wife to him. Besides,” she says —  
Now watch this thrust to pierce my holy shield —  
“ She is not in the church's eye his wife,  
She never was baptized ”— I almost laughed,  
But answered her, You think adultery  
Is less adultery in a case like this?  
“ Well, no,” she says, “ but could he be divorced

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The church would marry us." Go on, I said,  
And then she paused a little and went on:  
" I said I loved this man, and it is true,  
And years ago I gave myself to him,  
And then his wife found out there was a woman —  
But not that I was the woman — years ago  
At confirmation I confessed it all,  
Need only say this time I gave him up,  
And crushed him out with work — was chaste for years.  
And then I met a man, a different man  
Who stirred me otherwise, kept after me.  
At last I weakened, sinned three months ago,  
And suffered for it. For he took me, left me.  
As if he wanted body of me alone,  
And was not pleased with that. And after that,  
I think that I was mad, a furious passion  
Was kindled by this second man, and left  
With nothing to employ its flame. Two weeks  
Went by, he did not seek me out, none knew  
The hour of our departure. Then I thought  
How little I had been to this first lover,  
And of the years when I denied him — so  
To recompense his love, to serve him, father,  
Yes, to allay this passion newly raised  
By this new lover, whom I thought I loved,  
I went to my old lover, free of will,  
And took his lips and said to him, O take me,  
I am yours to do with as you choose to-night.  
He turned as pale as snow and shook with fear,  
His heart beat in this throat. I terrified him



## FATHER WHIMSETT

With this great will of mine in this small body.  
I went on while he stood there by the window,  
His back toward me. Make me wholly yours,  
Take no precaution, prudence throw away  
As mean, unworthy. Let your life precede,  
ForeSTALL the intruder's, if one be. And if  
A child must be, yours shall it be."

" He turned,  
And took me in his arms. . . ."

" And so to make  
As nearly as might be a marriage, father,  
I took — but let me tell you: I had thought  
His wife might die at any time, so thinking  
During these years I had bought bridal things;  
A veil, embroideries, silk lingerie.  
And I took to our room my negligee,  
Boudoir cap, satin slippers, so to make  
All beautiful as we were married, father.  
How have I sinned? I cannot deem it wrong.  
Do I not soil my soul with penitence,  
And smut this loveliness with penitence?  
Can I regret my work, nor take a hurt  
Upon my very soul? How keep it clean  
Confessing what I did (if I thought so)  
As evil and unclean?"

The devil again  
Entered with casuistry, as you perceive.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And so to make an end, I said to her,  
You must bring to this sacrament a heart  
Contrite and humble, promise me beside  
To sin no more. The case is in your hands,  
You can confess with lips, deny with heart,  
God only knows, I don't, it's on your soul  
To speak the truth or lie to me. Confess  
And I'll absolve you.— For in truth my heart  
Was touched by what she said, her lovely voice.

But now the story deepened. For she said,  
I have not told you all. And she renewed:  
“ Suppose you pack your trunk and have your lunch,  
Go to the station, but no train arrives,  
And there you wait and wait, until you're hungry,  
And nothing to do but wait, no place to lunch,  
You cannot leave the station, lest the train  
Should come while you are gone. Well, so it was,  
The weeks went by, and still we were not called.  
And I had closed my old life, sat and waited  
The time of leaving to begin new life.  
And after I had sinned with my first lover,  
Parted from him, said farewell, ended it,  
Could not go back to him, at least could think  
Of no way to return that would not dull  
The hour we lived together, look, this man,  
This second lover looks me up again  
And overwhelms me with a flaming passion.  
It seemed he had thought over what I was,  
Become all fire for me. He came to me,

## FATHER WHIMSETT

And said, I love you, love you, looked at me,  
And I could see the love-light in his eyes,  
The light that woman knows. Well, I was weak,  
Lonely and bored. He stirred my love besides;  
And then a curious thought came in my brain:  
The spirit is not found save through the flesh,  
O holy father, and I thought to self,  
Bring, as you may, these trials close together  
In point of time and see where spirit is,  
Where flesh directs to spirit most. And so  
I went with him again, and found in truth  
I loved him, he was mine and I was his,  
We two were for each other, my old lover  
Was just my love's beginning, not my love  
Fully and wholly, rapturously, this man  
Body and spirit harmonized with me.  
I found him through the love of my old lover,  
And knew by contrast, memory of the two  
And this immediate comparison  
Of spirits and of bodies, that this man  
Who left me, whom I turned from to the first,  
As I have tried to tell you, was the one.  
O holy father, he is married, too.  
And as I leave for France this ends as well;  
No child in me from either. I confess  
That I have sinned most grievously, I repent  
And promise I shall sin no more."

And so,  
I gave her absolution. Well, you see

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The church was dark, but I knew who it was,  
I knew the voice. She left. Another penitent  
Entered with a story. What is this?  
Here is a woman who's promiscuous.  
Tried number one and then tries number two,  
And comes and tells me, she has taken proof,  
Weighed evidence of spirit and of body,  
And thinks she knows at last, affirms as much.  
Such conduct will not do, that's plain enough,  
Not even if the truth of love is known  
This way, no other way.

Then Father Conway  
Began as follows: "I've a case like that,  
A woman married, but she found her husband  
Was just the cup of Tantalus and so. . . ."

But Father Whimsett said, "Why, look at that,  
I'm over-due a quarter of an hour.  
Come in to-morrow, father, tell me then."  
The two priests rose and left the room together.

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## JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

Carl Eaton and John Campbell both were raised  
With Elenor Murray in LeRoy. The mother  
Of Eaton lived there; but these boys had gone,  
Now grown to manhood to Chicago, where

## JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

They kept the old days of companionship.  
And Mrs. Eaton saw the coroner,  
And told him how she saved her son from Elenor,  
And broke their troth — because upon a time  
Elenor Murray, though betrothed, to Carl  
Went riding with John Campbell, and returned  
At two o'clock in the morning, drunk, and stood  
Helpless and weary, holding to the gate.  
For which she broke the engagement of her son  
To Elenor Murray. That was truth to her,  
And truth to Merival, for the time, at least.  
But this John Campbell and Carl Eaton meet  
One evening at a table drinking beer,  
And talk about the inquest, Elenor;  
Since much is published in the *Times* to stir  
Their memories of her. And John speaks up:  
“ Well, Carl, now Elenor Murray is no more,  
And we are friends so long, I'd like to know  
What do you think of her? ”

“ About the time,  
That May before she finished High School, Elenor  
Broke loose, ran wild, do you remember, Carl?  
She had some trouble in her home, I heard —  
She told me so. That Alma Bell affair  
Made all the fellows wonder, as you know,  
What kind of game she was, if she was game  
For me, or you, or anyone. Besides  
She had flirting eye, a winning laugh,  
And she was eighteen, and a cherry ripe.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

This Alma Bell affair and ills at home  
Made her spurt up and dart out like a fuse  
Which burns to powder wet and powder heated  
Until it burns; she burned, you see, and stopped  
When principles or something quenched the flame.  
I walked with her from school a time or two,  
When she was hinting, flirting with her eyes,  
I know it now, but what a dunce I was,  
As most men when they're twenty."

"Well, now listen!

A little later on an evening,  
I see her buggy riding with Roy Green,  
That rake, do you remember him, deadbeat,  
Half drunkard then, corrupted piece of flesh?  
She sat up in defiance by his side,  
Her chin stuck out to tell the staring ones:  
Go talk or censure to your heart's content.  
And people stood and stared to see her pass  
And shook their heads and wondered."

"Afterward

I learned from her this was the night at home  
Her father and her mother had a quarrel.  
Her mother asked her father to buy Elenor  
A new dress for commencement, and the father  
Was drinking and rebuffed her, so they quarreled.  
And rode with him to shame her father, coming  
After a long ride in the country home  
At ten o'clock or so."

JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

“ Well, then I thought,  
If she will ride with Roy Green, I go back  
To hinting and to flirting eyes and guess  
The girl will ride with me, or something more.  
So I begin to circle round the girl,  
And walk with her, and take her riding too.  
She drops Roy Green for me — what does he care?  
He’s had enough of her or never cared —  
Which is it? there’s the secret for a man  
As long as women interest him — who knows  
What the precedent fellow was to her?  
Roy Green takes to another and another.  
He died a year ago, as you’ll remember,  
What were his secrets, agony? he seemed  
A man to me who lived and never thought.”

“ So Elenor Murray went with me. Oh, well,  
She gave me kisses, let me hold her tight,  
We used to stop along the country ways  
And kiss as long as we had breath to kiss,  
And she would gasp and tremble.”

“ Then, at last  
A chum I had began to laugh at me,  
For, I was now in love with Elenor Murray.  
Don’t let her make a fool of you, he said,  
No girl who ever traveled with Roy Green  
Was not what he desired her, nor, before  
The kind of girl he wanted. Don’t you know  
Roy Green is laughing at you in his sleeve,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And boasts that Elenor Murray was all his?  
You see that stung me, for I thought at twenty  
Girls do not go so far, that only women  
Who sell themselves do so, or now and then  
A girl who is betrayed by hopes of marriage.  
And here was thrust upon me something devilish:  
The fair girl that I loved was wise already,  
And fooling me, and drinking in my love  
In mockery of me. This was my first  
Heart sickness, jaundice of the soul — dear me!  
And how I suffered, lay awake of nights,  
And wondered, doubted, hoped, or cursed myself,  
And cursed the girl as well. And I would think  
Of flirting eyes and hints and how she came  
To me before she went with this Roy Green.  
And I would hear the older men give hints  
About their conquests, speak of ways and signs  
From which to tell a woman. On the train  
Hear drummers boast and drop apothogems;  
The woman who drinks with you will be yours;  
Or she who gives herself to you will give  
To someone else; you know the kind of talk?  
Where wisdom of the sort is averaged up,  
But misses finer instances, the beauties  
Among the million phases of the thing.  
And, so at last I thought the girl was game.  
And had been snared, already. Why should I  
Be just a cooing dove, why not a hawk?  
We were out riding on a summer's night,  
A moon and all the rest, the scent of flowers,



JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

And many kisses, as on other times.  
At last with this sole object in my mind  
Long concentrated, purposed, all at once  
I found myself turned violent, with hands  
At grapple, twisting, forcing, and this girl  
In terror pleading with me. In a moment  
When I took time for breath, she said to me:  
' I will not ride with you — you let me out.'  
To which I said: ' You'll do what I desire  
Or you can walk ten miles back to LeRoy,  
And find Roy Green, you like him better, maybe.'  
And she said: ' Let me out,' and she jumped out,  
And would not ride with me another step,  
Though I repented saying, come and ride.  
I think it was a mile or more I drove  
The horse slowed up to keep her company,  
And then I cracked the whip and hurried on,  
And left her walking, looked from time to time  
To see her in the roadway, then drove on  
And reached LeRoy, which Elenor reached that morning  
At one or two."

“ Well, then what was the riddle?  
Was she in love with Roy Green yet, was she  
But playing with me, was I crude, left handed,  
Had she changed over, was she trying me  
To fasten in the hook of matrimony,  
Or was she good, and all this corner talk  
Of Roy Green just the dirt of dirty minds?  
You know the speculations, and you know

## DOMESDAY BOOK

How they befuddle one at twenty years.  
And sometimes I would grieve for what I did ;  
Then harden and laugh down my softness. But  
At last I wrote a note to Elenor Murray  
And sent it with a bouquet — but no word  
Came back from Elenor Murray. Then I thought :  
Here is a girl who rides with that Roy Green  
And what would he be with her for, I ask ?  
And if she wants to make a cause of war  
Out of an attitude she half provoked,  
Why let her — and moreover let her go.  
And so I dropped the matter, since she dropped  
My friendship from that night.”

“ But later on,  
Two years ago, when she came back to town  
From somewhere, I don't know, gone many months,  
Grown prettier, more desirable, I sent  
Some roses to her in a tender mood  
As if to say: We're grown up since that night,  
Have you forgotten it, as I remember  
How womanly you were, have grown to be?  
She wrote me just a little note of thanks,  
And what is strange that very day I learned  
About your interest in her, learned besides  
It prospered for some months before. I turned  
My heart away for good, as a man might  
Who plunges and beholds the woman smile  
And take another's arm and walk away.”

## JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

“ So, that’s your story, is it? ” said Carl Eaton.  
“ Well, I had married her except for you!  
That bunch of roses spoiled the girl for me.  
You had Roy Green, dog-fennel, I had roses,  
And I am glad you sent them, otherwise  
I might have married her, to find at last  
A wife just like her mother is, myself  
Living her father’s life, for something missed  
Or hated in me — not the want of money.  
She liked me as the banker’s son, be sure,  
And let me go unwillingly.”

“ But listen :

I called on her the night you sent the roses,  
And there she had them on the center table,  
And twinkled with her eyes, and spoke of them,  
And said, I can remember it, you sent  
Such lovely roses to her, you and she  
Had been good friends for years — and now it seems  
You were not friends — I didn’t know it then.  
But think about it, John! What was this woman?  
It’s clear her fate, found dead there by the river,  
Is just the outward mirror of herself,  
And had to be. There’s not a thing in life  
That is not first enacted in the heart.  
Our fate is the reflection of the life  
Which goes on in the heart. That girl was doomed,  
Lived in her heart a life that found a birth,  
Grew up, committed matricide at last,  
Not that my love had saved her. But explain

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Why would she over-stress the roses, give  
Me understandings foreign to the truth?  
For truth to tell, we were affianced then,  
There were your roses! But above it all  
Something she said pricked like a rose's thorn,  
Something that grew to thought she cherished you,  
Kept memories sweet of you. If that were true,  
What was the past? What was I after all?  
A second choice, as if I bought a car,  
But thought about a car I wanted more.  
So I retired that night in serious thought."

"Yet if you'll credit me, I had not heard  
About this Alma Bell affair, or heard  
About her riding through the public streets  
With this Roy Green. I think I was away,  
I never heard it anyway, I know  
Until my mother told me, and she told me  
Next morning after I had found your roses.  
I hadn't told my mother, nor a soul  
Before, that time that we two were engaged —  
I didn't tell her then — I merely asked  
Would Elenor Murray please you as a daughter?  
You should have seen my mother — how she gasped,  
And gestured losing breath, to say at last:  
'Why, Carl, my boy, what are you thinking of?  
You have not promised marriage to that girl?  
Now tell me, have you?' Then I lied to her;  
And laughed a little, answered no, and asked,  
'What do you know about her?'"

## JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

“ Here’s a joke,  
With terror in it, John, if you have told  
The truth to me — my mother tells me there  
That on a time John Campbell — that is you,  
And Elenor Murray rode into the country,  
And that at two o’clock, or so, the girl  
Is seen beside the gate post holding on,  
And reeling up the side-walk to her door.  
The girl was tired, if you have told the truth.  
My mother warms up to this scoundrel Green,  
And tops the matter off with Alma Bell.  
And all the love I had for Elenor Murray  
Sours in my heart. And then I tell my mother  
The truth — of our engagement — promise her  
To break it off. I did so on that day.  
Got back the solitaire — but Elenor  
Hung to me, asked my reasons, kept the ring  
Until I wrote so sternly she gave up  
Her hope and me.”

“ But worst of all, John Campbell —  
If this be worst — this early episode  
So nipped my leaves and browned and curled them up  
To whisper sharply with their bitter edges,  
No one has seen a bridal wreath in me;  
Nor have I ever known a woman since  
That some analysis did not blow cool  
A rising admiration.”

## DOMESDAY BOOK

“ Now to think  
This girl lies dead, and while we drink a beer  
You tell me that the story is a lie,  
The girl was good, walked ten miles through the dark  
To save her honor from a ruffian —  
That’s what you were, as you confess it now.  
And if she did that, what is all this talk  
Of such a rat as Green, of Alma Bell? —  
It isn’t true.”

“ The only truth is this:  
I took a lasting poison from a lie,  
Which built the very cells of me to resist  
The thought of marriage — poison which remains.  
I wonder should I tell the coroner?  
No good in that — you might as well describe  
A cancer to prevent the malady  
In people yet to be. Let’s have a beer.  
John Campbell said: I learned from Elenor Murray  
The kind of woman I should take to wife,  
I married just the woman made for me.”

“ If you can say so on your death bed, John,  
Then Elenor Murray did one man a good,  
Whatever ill she did to other men.  
See, I keep rapping for that waiter — I  
Would like another beer, and so would you.”

---

So now it’s clear the story is not true  
Which Mrs. Eaton told the coroner.

## JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

And when the coroner told the jurymen  
What Mrs. Eaton told him, Winthrop Marion  
Skilled in the work of running down a tale  
Said: "I can look up Eaton, Campbell too,  
And verify or contradict this thing.  
We have departed far afield in this,  
It has no bearing on the cause of death.  
But none of us have liked to see, the girl's  
Good name, integrity of spirit lie  
In shadow by this story." Merival  
Was glad to have these two men interviewed  
By Winthrop Marion; so he found them, talked,  
And brought their stories back, as told above  
Which made the soul of Elenor Murray clear. . . .

---

Paul Roberts was a man of sixty years,  
Who lived and ran a magazine at LeRoy.  
*The Dawn* he called it; financed by a fund  
Left Roberts by a millionaire, who believed  
The fund would widen knowledge through the use  
Of Roberts, student of the Eastern wisdom.  
This Roberts loathed the war, but kept his peace  
Because the law compelled it. Took this time  
To fight the Christian faith, and show the age  
Submerged in Christian ethics, weak and false.  
He knew this Elenor Murray from a child,  
And knew her rearing, schooling, knew the air  
She breathed in at LeRoy. And in *The Dawn*  
Printed this essay: —

## DOMESDAY BOOK

“ We have seen,” he writes,  
“Astonishing revealments, inventories  
Taken of souls, all coming from the death  
Of Elenor Murray, and the inquest held  
To ascertain her death. Perhaps fantastic  
This thing may be, but scarcely more fantastic  
Than rubbing amber, watching frogs’ legs twitch,  
From which the light of cities came, the power  
That hauls the coaches over mountain tops.  
We would do well to laugh at nothing, watch  
With interested eye the capering souls  
Too moved to walk straight. If a wire grounds  
And interpenetrates the granite blocks  
With viewless fire, horses shod with steel,  
Walking along the granite blocks will leap  
Like mad things in the air. Well, so we leap  
Before we know the cause. Let sound minds laugh.

First you agree no man has looked on God;  
And I contend the souls who found God, told  
Too little of their triumph. But I hold  
Man shall find God and know, shall see at last  
What man’s soul is, and where it tends, the use  
It was made for. And after that? Forever  
There’s progress while there’s life, all devolution  
Returns to progress.

As to worship, God  
They had their amber days, days of frogs’ legs.  
And yet before I trace the Christian growth



## JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

From seed to blossom, let me prophesy :  
The light upon the lotus blossom pauses,  
Has paused these centuries and waits to move  
Westward and mingle with the light that shines  
Upon the Occident. What did Christ do  
But carry the Hebraic thrift and prudence  
Of matter and of spirit, half-corrupted  
By wisdom of the market to these races  
That crowd in Europe, in the Western World?  
Now you have seen such things as chemistry,  
And mongering in steel, the use of fire  
Made perfect in swift wheels, and swifter wings,  
Until the realm of matter seems subdued,  
Thought with her foot upon the dragon's head,  
And using him to serve. This western world  
Massing its powers these centuries to bring  
Comfort and happiness and length of days,  
And pushing commerce, trade to pile up gold,  
Knows not its soul as yet, nor God. But here  
I prophesy : Suppose the Hindu lore,  
Which has gone farther with the soul of man  
Than we have gone with business, has card cased  
The soul's addresses, introduced a system  
In the soul's business, just suppose this lore  
And great perfection in things spiritual  
Should by some process wed the great perfection  
Of this our western world, and we should have  
Mastery of spirit and of matter, too?  
Might not that progress start as one result  
Of this great war?

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Let's see from whence we came.

I take the Hebrew faith, the very frog legs  
Of our theology — no use to say  
It has no place with us. Your ministers  
Preach from the Pentateuch, its decalogue  
Is all our ethic nearly; and our life  
Is suckled by the Hebrews; don't the Jews  
Control our business, while our business rules  
Our spirits far too much?

Now let us see

What food our spirits feed on. Palestine  
Is just a little country, fights for life  
Against a greater prowess, skill in arms.  
So as the will does not give up, but hopes  
For vengeance and for wiping out of wrongs  
The Jews conceive a God who will dry up  
His people's tears and let them laugh again!  
Hence in Jehovah's mouth they put these words:  
My word shall stand forever, you shall eat  
The riches of the Gentiles, suck their milk.  
Your ploughman shall the alien be, the stranger  
Shall feed your flock, and I will make you fat  
With milk and honey. I will give you power,  
Dominion, leadership, glory forever.  
My wrath is on all nations to avenge  
Israel's sorrow and humiliation.  
My sword is bathed in heaven, filled with blood  
To come upon Idumea, to stretch out  
Upon it stones of emptiness, confusion.

## JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

Her fortresses shall be the habitation  
Of dragons and a court for owls. I smite  
The proud Assyrian and make them dead.  
In fury, and in anger do I tread  
On Zion's enemies, their worm shall die not,  
Nor shall their fire be quenched. I shall stir up  
Jealousy like a man of war, put on  
The garments of my vengeance, and repay  
To adversaries fury. For my word  
Shall stand to preach good tidings to the meek,  
And liberty to captives, and to chains  
The opening of prisons.

Don't you see  
Our western culture in such words as these?  
Your proselytes, and business man, reformer  
Nourished upon them, using them in life?  
But then you say Christ came with final truth,  
And put away Jehovah. Let us see.  
What shall become of those who turn from Christ,  
Not that their souls failed, only that they turned,  
Did not believe, accept, found in him little  
To live by, grow by? This is what Christ said:  
Ye vipers in the last day ye shall see  
The sun turned dark, the moon made blood. Behold!  
I come in clouds of glory and of power  
To judge the quick and judge the dead. Mine own  
Shall enter into blessedness. But to those  
Evil who scorned me, I shall say, depart  
Accursed into everlasting fire.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And quick the gates of heaven shall be shut,  
And I shall reign in heaven with mine own  
And let my fire of wrath consume the world.

But then you say, what of his love and doctrine?  
Not the old decalogue by him renewed,  
But new wine to the Jews, if not in the world  
Unknown before. Look close and you shall see  
A book of double entries, balanced columns,  
Business in matters spiritual, prudential  
Rules for life's conduct. Yes, be merciful  
But to obtain your mercy; yes, forgive  
That you may be forgiven; honor your parents  
That your days may be long. Blest are the meek  
For they shall inherit the earth. Rejoice, for great  
Is your reward in heaven if they say  
All manner of evil of you, persecute you.  
Do you not see the rule of compensation  
Shot through it all? And if you love your neighbor,  
And all men do so, then you have the state  
Composed to such a level of peace, no man  
Need fear the breaker in, unless you keep  
This mood of love for preaching, for a rule  
While business in the Occident goes on  
Under Jehovah's Hebrew manual.  
What is it all? The meek inherit the earth  
For being meek; you turn the other cheek  
And fill your enemy with shame to strike  
A cheek that does not harden to return  
The blow received. But too much in our life

## JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

The cheek is turned, the hand not made a fist,  
But opened out to pick a pocket with,  
While the other cheek is turned. Now, at the last  
Has not this war put by resist not evil?  
Which was the way of Jesus to the end,  
Even to buffetings and the crown of thorns;  
Even the cross and death? — we put it by:  
We would not let protagonists thereof  
So much as hint the doctrine, which is to say,  
Though it be written over Jesus' life,  
And be his spirit's essence, we see through  
The fallacy of that preachment, cannot live  
In this world by it.

Well, let me be plain.  
Races like men find truth in living life,  
Find thereby what is food and what is poison.  
These are the phylogenetics spiritual.  
But meanwhile there's the light upon the lotus  
Which waits to mingle with the light that shines  
Upon the Occident, take Jesus' light  
Where it is bright enough to mix with it  
And show no duller splendor?

I look back  
Upon the Jew and Jesus, on the Thora  
The gospel, dogmatism, poetry,  
The Messianic hope and will and grace,  
Jesus the Son of God, and one with God.  
The outer theocracy, the Kingdom of God within you,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

St. Paul with metaphysics, St. Augustine  
Babbling of sin in Cicero's rhetoric,  
The popes with their intrigues and millions slain  
O ghastly waste, if not O ghastly failure,  
Beside which all the tragedies of time  
To set up doctrines, rulerships, and say:  
Are not a finger scratched. O monstrous hate  
Born of enfolding love! O martyrdom  
Of our poor world for ages, incurable madness  
Bred in the blood, and mixed in the forms of thought,  
Still maddening, maiming, crucifying, killing  
The fast appearing sons of men. Go ask  
What man you will who has lived up to forty  
And see if you find not the Christian creed  
Has not in some way gyved his life and bolted  
Body or spirit to a wall, to make  
The man live not by nature, but a doctrine  
Evolved from thought that disregards man's life.  
But oh this hunger of the mind for answers  
And hunger of the heart for life, the heart  
Thrown to the dogs of thought. What shall we do?  
I see a way, have hope.

The blessed Lord

Says, ye deluded by un wisdom say:  
This day is won, this purpose gained, this wealth  
Made mine, to-morrow safe — behold  
My enemy is slain, I am well-born —  
O ye deluded ones, slaves of desire,  
Self-satisfied and stubborn, filled with pride,

## JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

Power, lust and wrath — haters of me, the gate  
Of hell is triple, bitter is the womb  
In which ye sink deluded, birth on birth,  
These not renouncing. But O soul attend,  
Yield not to impotence, shake off your fears,  
Be steadfast, balanced, free from hate and anger,  
Balanced in pleasure and pain, and active,  
Yet disregarding action's fruits — be friendly,  
Compassionate, forgiving, self-controlled,  
Resolute, not shrinking from the world,  
But mixing in its toils as fate may say;  
Pure, expert, passionless, desire in leash,  
Renouncing good and evil, to friend and foe,  
In fame and ignominy destitute  
Of that attachment which disturbs the vision  
And labor of the soul. By these to fix  
Eyes undistracted on me, the supreme  
And Sole Reality. And O remember  
Thou soul, thou shalt not sin who workest through  
Thy Karma as its nature may command.  
Strive with thy sin and it shall make the muscles,  
And strength to take thee to another height.  
But cleave to the practice of thy soul forever,  
Also to wisdom better still than practice,  
To meditation, better still than wisdom,  
To renunciation, better than meditation,  
Beholding Me in all things, in all things  
Me who would have you peace of soul attain,  
And soul's perfection.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Well, I say here lies  
Profounder truth and purer than the words  
That Jesus spoke. Let's take forgiveness:  
Forgive your enemies, he said, and bless  
Them even that hate you. What did Jesus do?  
Did he forgive the thief upon the cross,  
Who railed at him? He did forgive the hands  
Who crucified him, but he had a reason:  
They knew not what they did; well, as for that  
Who knows the thing he does? Did he forgive  
Judas Iscariot? Did he forgive  
Poor Peter by specific words? You see  
In instances like these the idealist,  
Passionate and inexorable who sets up  
His soul against the world, but do you see  
The esoteric wisdom which takes note  
Of the soul's health, just for the sake of health,  
And leaves the outward recompense alone?

Yes, what has Jesus done but make a realm  
Of outward law and force to strain and bind  
The sons of men to this thing and to that,  
Bring the fanatic and the dogmatist  
In every neighborhood in America.  
And radical with axes after trees,  
And clergymen with curses on the fig trees?  
And even bring this Kaiser and his dream  
Of God's will in him to destroy his foes,  
And launch the war therefor, to make his realm  
And Christian culture paramount in time.



## JOHN CAMPBELL AND CARL EATON

When all the while 'tis clear life does not yield  
Proof positive of exoteric things.  
Why the great truth of life is this, I think:  
The soul has freedom to create its world  
Of beauty, truth, to make the world as truth  
Or beauty, build philosophies, religions,  
And live by them, through them. It does not matter  
Whether they're true, the significant thing is this:  
The soul has freedom to create, to take  
The void of unintelligible air, or thought  
The world at large, and of it make the food,  
Impulse and meaning for its life. I say  
Life is for nothing else, truth is not ours;  
That only ours which we create, by which  
We live and grow, and so we come again  
By this path of my own to India.

What shall we do, you ask, if business dies,  
If the western world, the world for socialism  
Lops off its leaves and branches, and the sap  
Is thrown back in the trunk unused, or if  
This light upon the lotus quiets us  
And makes us mind entirely? Well, I say,  
Men have not lived, enjoyed enough before.  
Our strength has gone to get the means for strength.  
We roll the rock of business up, and see  
The rock roll down, and roll it up again.  
And if the new day does not give us work  
In finding what our minds are, how to use them,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And how to live more beautifully, I miss  
A guess I often make.

But now to close:  
Only the blind have failed to see how truly  
This Elenor Murray worked her Karma out.  
And how she put forth strength to cure her weakness,  
And went her vital way, and toiled and died.  
Peace to all worlds, and peace to Elenor Murray.

---

The coroner had heard that Elenor Murray  
Once crossed the Arctic Circle. What of that?  
She traveled, it was proved. What happened there?  
What hunter after secrets could find out?  
But on a day the name of Elenor Murray  
Is handled by two men who sit and talk  
In Fairbanks, and the talk is in these words:

---

## AT FAIRBANKS

Bill, look here! Here's the *Times*. You see this picture,  
Read if you like a little later. You never  
Heard how I came to Fairbanks, chanced to stay,  
It's eight years now. You see in nineteen eleven  
I lived in Hammond, Indiana, thought  
I'd like a trip, see mountains, see Alaska,  
Perhaps find fortune or a woman — well  
You know from your experience how it is.

## AT FAIRBANKS

It was July and from the train I saw  
The Canadian Rockies, stopped at Banff a day,  
At Lake Louise, and so forth. At Vancouver  
Found travelers feasting, Englishmen in drink,  
Flirtations budding, coming into flower;  
And eager spirits waiting for the boat.  
Up to this time I hadn't made a friend,  
Stalked silently about along the streets,  
Drank Scotch like all the rest, as much besides.

Well, then we took the steamship *Princess Alice*  
And started up the Inland Channel — great!  
Got on our cheeks the breezes from the crystal  
Cradles of the north, began at once  
To find the mystery, silence, see clear stars,  
The whites and blacks and greens along the shores.  
And still I had no friend, was quite alone.  
Just as I came on deck I saw a face,  
Looked, stared perhaps. Her eyes went over me,  
Would not look at me. At the dinner table  
She sat far down from me, I could not see her,  
But made a point to rise when she arose,  
Did all I could to catch her eye — no use.  
So things went and I gave up — still I wondered  
Why she had no companion. Was she married?  
Was husband waiting her, at Skagway? — well  
I fancied something of the sort, at last,  
And as I said, gave up.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

But on a morning

I rose to see the sun rise, all the sky  
First as a giant pansy, petals flung  
In violet toward the zenith streaked with fire;  
The silver of the snows change under light,  
Mottled with shadows of the mountain tops  
Like leaves that shadow, flutter on a lawn.  
At last the topaz splendors shoot to heaven,  
The sun just peeks and gilds the porcelain  
Of snow with purest gold. And in the valleys  
Darkness remains, Orician ebony  
Is not more black. You've seen this too, I know,  
And recognize my picture. There I stood,  
Believed I was alone, then heard a voice,  
"Is it not beautiful?" and looked around,  
And saw my girl, who had avoided me,  
Would not make friends before. This is her picture,  
Name, Elenor Murray. So the matter started.  
I had my seat at table changed and sat  
Next to my girl to talk with her. We walked  
The deck together. Then she said to me  
Her home was in Chicago, so it is  
Travelers abroad discover they are neighbors  
When they are home. She had been teaching school,  
And saved her money for this trip, had planned  
To go as far as Fairbanks. As for me,  
I thought I'd stop with Skagway — Oh this life!  
Your hat blows off, you chase it, bump a woman,  
Then beg her pardon, laugh and get acquainted,  
And marry later.

## AT FAIRBANKS

As we steamed along  
She was the happiest spirit on the deck.  
The Wrangell Narrows almost drove her wild,  
There where the mountains are like circus tents,  
Big show, menagerie and all the rest,  
But white as cotton with perennial snow.  
We swum past aisles of pine trees where a stream  
Rushed down in terraces of hoary foam.  
The nights were glorious. We drank and ate  
And danced when there was dancing.

Well, at first,  
She seemed a little school ma'am, quaint, demure,  
Meticulous and puritanical.  
And then she seemed a school ma'am out to have  
A time, so far away, where none would know,  
And like a woman who had heard of life  
And had a teasing interest in its wonder,  
Too long caged up. At last my vision blurred:  
I did not know her, lost my first impressions  
Amid succeeding phases which she showed.

But when we came to Skagway, then I saw  
Another Elenor Murray. How she danced  
And tripped from place to place — such energy!  
She almost wore me out with seeing sights.  
But now behold! The White Pass she must see  
Upon the principle of missing nothing —  
But oh the grave of "Soapy" Smith, the outlaw,  
The gambler and the heeler, that for her!

## DOMESDAY BOOK

We went four miles and found the cemetery,  
The grave of "Soapy" Smith.— Came back to town  
Where she would see the buildings where they played  
Stud poker, Keno, in the riotous days.  
Time came for her to go. She looked at me  
And said "Come on to Fairbanks." As for that,  
I'd had enough, was ready to return,  
But sensed an honorarium, so I said,  
"You might induce me," with a pregnant tone.  
That moment we were walking 'cross the street,  
She stopped a moment, shook from head to heels,  
And said, "No man has talked to me that way."  
I dropped the matter. She renewed it — said,  
"Why do you hurry back? What calls you back?  
Come on to Fairbanks, see the gardens there,  
That tag the blizzards with their rosy hands  
And romp amid the snows." She smiled at me.  
Well, then I thought — why not? And smiled her back,  
And on we went to Fairbanks, where my hat  
Blows off, as I shall tell you.

For a day

We did the town together, and that night  
I thought to win her. First we dined together,  
Had many drinks, my little school ma'am drank  
Of everything I ordered, had a place  
For more than I could drink. And truth to tell  
At bed time I was woozy, ten o'clock.  
We had not registered. And so I said,  
"I'm Mr. Kelly and you're Mrs. Kelly."

## AT FAIRBANKS

She shook her head. And so to make an end  
I could not win her, signed my name in full;  
She did the same, we said good night and parted.

Next morning when I woke, felt none too good,  
Got up at last and met her down at breakfast;  
Tried eggs and toast, could only drink some coffee;  
Got worse; in short, she saw it, put her hand  
Upon my head and said, "Your head is hot,  
You have a fever." Well, I lolled around  
And tried to fight it off till noon — no good.  
By this time I was sick, lay down to rest.  
By night I could not lift my head — in short,  
I lay there for a month, and all the time  
She cared for me just like a mother would.  
They moved me to a suite, she took the room  
That opened into mine, by night and day  
She nursed me, cheered me, read to me. At last  
When I sat up, was soon to be about,  
She said to me, "I'm going on to Nome,  
St. Michael first. They tell me that you cross  
The Arctic Circle going to St. Michael,  
And I must cross the Arctic Circle — think  
To come this far and miss it. I must see  
The Indian villages." And there again  
I saw, but clearer than before, the spirit  
Adventuresome and restless, what you call  
The heart American. I said to her,  
"I'm not too well, I'm lonely,— yes, and more —  
I'm fond of you, you have been good to me,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Stay with me here.—She darted in and out  
The room where I was lying, doing things,  
And broke my pleadings just like icicles  
You shoot against a wall.

But here she was,  
A month in Fairbanks, living at expense,  
Said "I am short of money — lend me some,  
I'll go to Nome, return to you and then  
We'll ship together for the States."

You see  
I really owed her money for her care,  
Her loss in staying — then I loved the girl,  
Had played all cards but one — I played it now:  
"Come back and marry me." Her eyes looked down.  
"I will be fair with you," she said, "and think.  
Away from you I can make up my mind  
If I have love enough to marry you."  
I gave her money and she went away,  
And for some weeks I had a splendid hell  
Of loneliness and longing, you might know,  
A stranger in Alaska, here in Fairbanks,  
In love besides, and mulling in my mind  
Our days and nights upon the steamer *Alice*,  
Our ramblings in the Northland.

Weeks went by,  
No letter and no girl. I found my health  
Was vigorous again. One morning walking



## AT FAIRBANKS

I kicked a twenty dollar gold piece up  
Right on the side-walk. Picked it up and said:  
“ An omen of good luck, a letter soon!  
Perhaps this town has something for me! ” Well,  
I thought I'd get a job to pass the time  
While waiting for my girl. I got the job  
And here I am to-day; I've flourished here,  
Worked to the top in Fairbanks in eight years,  
And thus my hat blew off.

What of the girl?

Six weeks or more a letter came from her,  
She crossed the Arctic Circle, went to Nome,  
Sailed back to 'Frisco where she wrote to me.  
Sent all the money back I loaned to her,  
And thanked me for the honor I had done her  
In asking her in marriage, but had thought  
The matter over, could not marry me,  
Thought in the circumstances it was useless  
To come to Fairbanks, see me, tell me so.

Now, Bill, I'm egotist enough to think  
This girl could do no better. Now it seems  
She's dead and never married — why not me?  
Why did she ditch me? So I thought about it,  
Was piqued of course, concluded in the end  
There was another man. A woman's no  
Means she has someone else, expects to have,  
More suited to her fancy. Then one morning  
As I awoke with thoughts of her as usual

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Right in my mind there plumped an incident  
On shipboard when she asked me if I knew  
A certain man in Chicago. At the time  
The question passed amid our running talk,  
And made no memory. But you watch and see  
A woman when she asks you if you know  
A certain man, the chances are the man  
Is something in her life. So now I lay  
And thought there is a man, and that's the man;  
His name is stored away, I'll dig it up  
Out of the cells subliminal — so I thought  
But could not bring it back.

I found at last  
The telephone directory of Chicago,  
And searched and searched the names from A to Z.  
Some mornings would pronounce a name and think  
That is the name, then throw the name away —  
It did not fit the echo in my brain.

But now at last — look here! Eight years are gone,  
I'm healed of Elenor Murray, married too;  
And read about her death here in the *Times*,  
And turn the pages over — column five —  
Chicago startled by a suicide —  
Gregory Wenner kills himself — behold  
The name, at last, she spoke!

---

So much for waters in Alaska. Now  
Turn eyes upon the waters nearer home.

## ANTON SOSNOWSKI

Anton Sosnowski has a fateful day  
And Winthrop Marion runs the story down,  
And learns Sosnowski read the *Times* the day,  
He broke from brooding to a dreadful deed ;  
Sosnowski saw the face of Elenor Murray  
And Rufus Fox upon the self-same page,  
And afterwards was known to show a clipping  
Concerning Elenor Murray and the banner  
Of Joan of Arc, the words she wrote and folded  
Within the banner: to be brave, nor flinch.

---

## ANTON SOSNOWSKI

Anton Sosnowski, from the Shakspeare School  
Where he assists the janitor, sweeps and dusts,  
The day now done, sits by a smeared up table  
Munching coarse bread and drinking beer ; before him  
The evening paper spread, held down or turned  
By claw-like hands, covered with shiny scars.  
He broods upon the war news, and his fate  
Which keeps him from the war, looks up and sees  
His scarred face in the mirror over the wainscot ;  
His lashless eyes and browless brows and head  
With patches of thin hair. And then he mutters  
Hot curses to himself and turns the paper  
And curses Germany, and asks revenge  
For Poland's wrongs.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And what is this he sees?

The picture of his ruin and his hate,  
Wert Rufus Fox! This leader of the bar  
Is made the counselor of the city, now  
The city takes gas, cars and telephones  
And runs them for the people. So this man  
Grown rich through machinations against the people,  
Who fought the people all his life before,  
Abettor, aider, thinker for the slickers  
Regraters and forestallers and engrossers,  
Is now the friend, adviser of the city,  
Which he so balked and thwarted, growing rich,  
Feared, noted, bowed to for the very treason  
For which he is so hated, yet deferred to.

And Anton looks upon the picture, reads  
About the great man's ancestry here printed,  
And all the great achievements of his life;  
Once president of the bar association,  
And member of this club and of that club.  
Contributor to charities and art,  
A founder of a library, a vestryman.  
And Anton looks upon the picture, trembles  
Before the picture's eyes. They are the eyes  
Of Innocent the Tenth, with cruelty  
And cunning added — eyes that see all things  
And boulder jaws that crush all things — the jaws  
That place themselves at front of drifts, are placed  
By that world irony which mocks the good,

## ANTON SOSNOWSKI

And gives the glory and the victory  
To strength and greed.

Anton Sosnowski looks  
Long at the picture, then at his own hands,  
And laughs maniacally as he takes the mug  
With both hands like a bird with frozen claws,  
These broken, burned off hands which handle bread  
As they were wooden rakes. And in a mirror  
Beside the table in the wall, smeared over  
With steam from red-hots, kraut and cookery,  
Of smoking fats, fixed by the dust in blurs,  
And streaks, he sees his own face, horrible  
For scars and splotches as of leprosy;  
The eyes that have no lashes and no brows;  
The bullet head that has no hair, the ears  
Burnt off at top.

So comes it to this Pole  
Who sees beside the picture of the lawyer  
The clear cut face of Elenor Murray — yes,  
She gave her spirit to the war, is dead,  
Her life is being sifted now. But Fox  
Lives for more honors, and by honors covers  
His days of evil.

Thus Sosnowski broods,  
And lives again that moment of hell when fire  
Burst like a geyser from a vat where gas  
Had gathered in his ignorance; being sent

## DOMESDAY BOOK

To light a drying stove within the vat,  
A work not his, who was the engineer.  
The gas exploded as he struck the match,  
And like an insect fixed upon a pin  
And held before a flame, hands, face and body  
Were burned and broken as his body shot  
Up and against the brewery wall. What next?  
The wearisome and tangled ways of courts  
With Rufus Fox for foe, four trials in all  
Where juries disagreed who heard the law  
Erroneously given by the court.  
At last a verdict favorable, and a court  
Sitting above the forum where he won  
To say, as there's no evidence to show  
Just how the gas got in the vat, Sosnowski  
Must go for life with broken hands unhelped.  
And that the fact alone of gas therein  
Though naught to show his fault had brought it there,  
The mere explosion did not speak a fault  
Against the brewery.

Out from court he went  
To use a broom with crumpled hands, and look  
For life in mirrors at his ghastly face.  
And brood until suspicion grew to truth  
That Rufus Fox had compassed juries, courts;  
And read of Rufus Fox, who day by day  
Was featured in the press for noble deeds,  
For Art or Charity, for notable dinners,  
Guests, travels and what not.

## ANTON SOSNOWSKI

So now the Pole

Reading of Elenor Murray, cursed himself  
That he could brood and wait — for what? — and grow  
More weak of will for brooding, while this woman  
Had gone to war and served and ended it,  
Yet he lived on, and could not go to war;  
Saw only days of sweeping with these hands,  
And every day his face within the mirror,  
And every afternoon this glass of beer,  
And coarse bread, and these thoughts.  
And every day some story to arouse  
His sense of justice; how the generous  
Give and pass on, and how the selfish live  
And gather honors. But Sosnowski thought  
If I could do a flaming thing to show  
What courts are ours, what matter if I die?  
What if they took their quick-lime and erased  
My flesh and bones, expunged my very name,  
And made its syllables forbidden? — still  
If I brought in a new day for the courts,  
Have I not served? he thought. Sosnowski rose  
And to the bar, drank whiskey, then went out.

That afternoon Elihu Rufus Fox  
Came home to dress for a dinner to be given  
For English notables in town — to rest  
After a bath, and found himself alone,  
His wife at Red Cross work. And there alone,  
Collarless, lounging, in a comfort chair,  
Poring on Wordsworth's poems — all at once

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Before he hears the door turned, rather feels  
A foot-fall and a presence, hears too soon  
A pistol shot, looks up and sees Sosnowski,  
Who fires again, but misses; grabs the man,  
Disarms him, flings him down, and finding blood  
Upon his shirt sleeve, sees his hand is hit,  
No other damage — then the pistol takes,  
And covering Sosnowski, looks at him.  
And after several seconds gets the face  
Which gradually comes forth from memories  
Of many cases, knows the man at last.  
And studying Sosnowski, Rufus Fox  
Divines what drove the fellow to this deed.  
And in these moments Rufus Fox beholds  
His life and work, and how he made the law  
A thing to use, how he had builded friendships  
In clubs and churches, courted politicians,  
And played with secret powers, and compromised  
Causes and truths for power and capital  
To draw on as a lawyer, so to win  
Favorable judgments when his skill was hired  
By those who wished to win, who had to win  
To keep the social order undisturbed  
And wealth where it was wrenched to.

And Rufus Fox  
Knew that this trembling wreck before him knew  
About this course of life at making law  
And using law, and using those who sit



## ANTON SOSNOWSKI

To administer the law. And then he said:  
“ Why did you do this? ”

And Sosnowski spoke:  
“ I meant to kill you — where’s your right to live  
When millions have been killed to make the world  
A safer place for liberty? Where’s your right  
To live and have more honors, be the man  
To guide the city, now that telephones,  
Gas, railways have been taken by the city?  
I meant to kill you just to help the poor  
Who go to court. For had I killed you here  
My story would be known, no matter if  
They buried me in lime, and made my name  
A word no man could speak. Now I have failed.  
And since you have the pistol, point it at me  
And kill me now — for if you tell the world  
You killed me in defense of self, the world  
Will never doubt you, for the world believes you  
And will not doubt your word, whatever it is.”

And Rufus Fox replied: “ Your mind is turned  
For thinking of your case, when you should know  
This country is a place of laws, and law  
Must have its way, no matter who is hurt.  
Now I must turn you over to the courts,  
And let you feel the hard hand of the law.”  
Just then the wife of Rufus Fox came in,  
And saw her husband with his granite jaws,  
And lowering countenance, blood on his shirt,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The pistol in his hand, the scarred Sosnowski,  
Facing the lawyer.

Seeing that her husband  
Had no wound but a hand clipped of the skin,  
And learning what the story was, she saw  
It was no time to let Sosnowski's wrong  
Come out to cloud the glory of her husband,  
Now that in a new day he had come to stand  
With progress, fairer terms of life — to let  
The corpse of a dead day be brought beside  
The fresh and breathing life of brighter truth.  
Quickly she called the butler, gave him charge  
Over Sosnowski, who was taken out,  
Held in the kitchen, while the two conferred,  
The husband and the wife.

To him she said,  
They two alone now: "I can see your plan  
To turn this fellow over to the law.  
It will not do, my dear, it will not do.  
For though I have been sharer in your life,  
Partaker of its spoils and fruits, I see  
This man is just a ghost of a dead day  
Of your past life, perhaps, in which I shared.  
But that dead life I would not resurrect  
In memory even, it has passed us by,  
You shall not live it more, no more shall I.  
The war has changed the world — the harvest coming  
Will have its tares no doubt, but the old tares

## ANTON SOSNOWSKI

Have been cut out and burned, wholly, I trust.  
And just to think you used that sharpened talent  
For getting money, place, in the old regime,  
To place you where to-day? Why, where you must  
Use all your talents for the common good.  
A barter takes two parties, and the traffic  
Whereby the giants of the era gone —  
(You are a giant rising on the wreck  
Of programs and of plots)—made riches for  
Themselves and those they served, is gone as well.  
Since gradually no one is left to serve  
Or have an interest but the state or city,  
The community which is all and should be all.  
So here you are at last despite yourself,  
Changed not in mind perhaps, but changed in place,  
Work, interest, taking pride too in the work;  
And speaking with your outer mind, at least  
Praise for the day and work.

I am at fault,  
And take no virtue to myself — I lived  
Your life with you and coveted the things  
Your labors brought me. All is changed for me.  
I would be poorer than this wretched Pole  
Rather than go back to the day that's dead,  
Or reassume the moods I lived them through.  
What can we do now to undo the past,  
Those days of self-indulgence, ostentation,  
False prestige, witless pride, that waste of time,  
Money and spirit, haunted by ennui

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Insatiable emotion, thirst for change.  
At least we can do this: We can set up  
The race's progress and our country's glory  
As standards for our work each day, go on  
Perhaps in ignorance, misguided faith;  
And let the end approve our poor attempts.  
Now to begin, I ask two things of you:  
If you or anyone who did your will  
Wronged this poor Pole, make good the wrong at once.  
And for the sake of bigness let him go.  
For your own name's sake, let the fellow go.  
Do you so promise me?"

And Rufus Fox,  
Who looked a thunder cloud of wrath and power  
Before the mirror tying his white tie,  
All this time silent — only spoke these words:  
"Go tell the butler to keep guard on him  
And hold him till we come from dinner."

The wife  
Looked at the red black face of Rufus Fox  
There in the mirror, which like Lao's mirror  
Reflected what his mind was, then went out  
Gently to her bidding, found Sosnowski  
Laughing and talking with the second maid,  
Watched over by the butler, quite himself,  
His pent up anger half discharged, his grudge  
In part relieved.

## CONSIDER FREELAND

There was a garrulous ancient at LeRoy  
Who traced all evils to monopoly  
In land, all social cures to single tax.  
He tried to button-hole the coroner  
And tell him what he thought of Elenor Murray.  
But Merival escaped. And then this man,  
Consider Freeland named, got in a group  
And talked his mind out of the case, the land  
And what makes poverty and waste in lives:

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## CONSIDER FREELAND

Look at that tract of land there — five good acres  
Held out of use these thirty years and more.  
They keep a cow there. See! the cow's there now.  
She can't eat up the grass, there is so much.  
And in these thirty years these houses here,  
Here, all around here have been built. This lot  
Is worth five times the worth it had before  
These houses were built round it.

Well, by God,

I am in part responsible for this.  
I started out to be a first rate lawyer.  
Was I first rate lawyer? Well, I won  
These acres for the Burtons in the day  
When I could tell you what is gavel kind,  
Advowsons, corodies, frank tenements,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Scutage, escheats, feoffments, heriots,  
Remainders and reversions, and mortmain,  
Tale special and tale general, tale female,  
Fees absolute, conditional, copyholds;  
And used to stand and argue with the courts  
The difference 'twixt a purchase, limitation,  
The rule in Shelley's case.

And so it was  
In my good days I won these acres here  
For old man Kingston's daughter, who in turn  
Bound it with limitation for the life  
Of selfish sons, who keep a caretaker,  
Who keeps a cow upon it. There's the cow!  
The land has had no use for thirty years.  
The children are kept off it. Elenor Murray,  
This girl whose death makes such a stir, one time  
Was playing there — but that's another story.  
I only say for the present, these five acres  
Made Elenor Murray's life a thing of waste  
As much as anything, and a damn sight more.  
For think a minute!

Kingston had a daughter  
Married to Colonel Burton in Kentucky.  
And Kingston's son was in the Civil War.  
But just before the war, the Burtons deeded  
These acres here, which she inherited  
From old man Kingston, to this Captain Kingston,  
The son aforesaid of Old Kingston. Well,

## CONSIDER FREELAND

The deed upon its face was absolute,  
But really was a deed in trust.

### The Captain

Held title for a year or two, and then  
An hour before he fought at Shiloh, made  
A will, and willed acres to his wife,  
Fee simple and forever. Now you'd think  
That contemplating death, he'd make a deed  
Giving these acres back to Mrs. Burton,  
The sister who had trusted him. I don't know  
What comes in people's heads, but I believe  
The want of money is the root of evil,  
As well as love of money; for this Captain  
Perhaps would make provision for his wife  
And infant son, thought that the chiefest thing  
No matter how he did it, being poor,  
Willed this land as he did. But anyway  
He willed it so, went into Shiloh's battle,  
And fell dead on the field.

### What happened then?

They took this will to probate. As I said  
I was a lawyer then, you may believe it,  
Was hired by the Burtons to reclaim  
These acres from the Widow Kingston's clutch,  
Under this wicked will. And so I argued  
The will had not been witnessed according to law.  
Got beat upon that point in the lower court,  
But won upon it in the upper courts.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Then next I filed a bill to set aside  
This deed the Burtons made to Captain Kingston —  
Oh, I was full of schemes, expedients,  
In those days, I can tell you. Widow Kingston  
Came back and filed a cross bill, asked the court  
To confirm the title in her son and her  
As heirs of Captain Kingston, let the will  
Go out of thought and reckoning. Here's the issue;  
You understand the case, no doubt. We fought  
Through all the courts. I lost in the lower court,  
As I lost on the will. There was the deed:  
For love and affection and one dollar we  
Convey and warrant lots from one to ten  
In the city of LeRoy, to Captain Kingston  
To be his own forever.

### How to go

Behind such words and show the actual trust  
Inhering in the deed, that was the job.  
But here I was resourceful as before,  
Found witnesses to testify they heard  
This Captain Kingston say he held the acres  
In trust for Mrs. Burton — but I lost  
Before the chancellor, had to appeal,  
But won on the appeal, and thus restored  
These acres to the Burtons. And for this  
What did I get? Three hundred lousy dollars.  
That's why I smoke a pipe; that's also why  
I quit the business when I saw the business  
Was making ready to quit me. By God,



## CONSIDER FREELAND

My life is waste so far as it was used  
By this law business, and no coroner  
Need hold an inquest on me to find out  
What waste was in my life — God damn the law!

Well, then I go my way, and take my fee,  
And pay my bills. The Burtons have the land,  
And turn a cow upon it. See how nice  
A playground it would be. I've seen ten sets  
Of children try to play there — hey! you hear,  
The caretaker come out, get off of there!  
And then the children scamper, climb the fence.

Well, after while the Burtons die. The will  
Leaves these five acres to their sons for life,  
Remainder to the children of the sons.  
The sons are living yet at middle life,  
These acres have been tied up twenty years,  
They may be tied up thirty years beside:  
The sons can't sell it, and their children can't,  
Only the cow can use it, as it stands.  
It grows more valuable as the people come here,  
And bring in being Elenor Murrays, children,  
And make the land around it populous.  
That's what makes poverty, this holding land,  
It makes the taxes harder on the poor,  
It makes work scarcer, and it takes your girls  
And boys and throws them into life half made,  
Half ready for the battle. Is a country  
Free where the laws permit such things? Your priests,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Your addle-headed preachers mouthing Christ  
And morals, prohibition, laws to force  
People to be good, to save the girls,  
When every half-wit knows environment  
Takes natures, made unstable in these homes  
Of poverty and does the trick.

That baronet  
Who mocked our freedom, sailing back for England  
And said: Your Liberty Statue in the harbor  
Is just a joke, that baronet is right,  
While such conditions thrive.

Well, look at me  
Who for three hundred dollars take a part  
In making a cow pasture for a cow  
For fifty years or so. I hate myself.  
And were the Burtons better than this Kingston?  
Kingston would will away what was not his.  
The Burtons took what is the gift of God,  
As much as air, and fenced it out of use —  
Save for the cow aforesaid — for the lives  
Of sons in being.

Oh, I know you think  
I have a grudge. I have.

This Elenor Murray  
Was ten years old I think, this law suit ended  
Twelve years or so, and I was running down,

## CONSIDER FREELAND

Was tipping just a little every day;  
And I came by this lot one afternoon  
When school was out, a sunny afternoon.  
The children had no place except the street  
To play in; they were standing by the fence,  
The cow was way across the lot, and Elenor  
Was looking through the fence, some boys and girls  
Standing around her, and I said to them:  
“Why don’t you climb the fence and play in there?”  
And Elenor — she always was a leader,  
And not afraid of anything, said: “Come on,”  
And in a jiffy climbed the fence, the children,  
Some quicker and some slower, followed her.  
Some said “They don’t allow it.” Elenor  
Stood on the fence, flung up her arms and crowed,  
And said “What can they do? He says to do it,”  
Pointing at me. And in a moment all of them  
Were playing and were shouting in the lot.  
And I stood there and watched them half malicious,  
And half in pleasure watching them at play.  
Then I heard “hey!” the care-taker ran out.  
And said “Get out of there, I will arrest you.”  
He drove them out and as they jumped the fence  
Some said, “He told us to,” pointing at me.  
And Elenor Murray said “Why, what a lie!”  
And then the care-taker grabbed Elenor Murray  
And said, “You are the wildest of them all.”  
I spoke up, saying, “Leave that child alone.  
I won this God damn land for those you serve,  
They use it for a cow and nothing else,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And let these children run about the streets,  
When there are grass and dandelions there  
In plenty for these children, and the cow,  
And space enough to play in without bothering  
That solitary cow." I took his hands  
Away from Elenor Murray; he and I  
Came face to face with clenched fists — but at last  
He walked away; the children scampered off.

Next day, however, they arrested me  
For aiding in a *trespass clausam fregit*,  
And fined me twenty dollars and the costs.  
Since then the cow has all her way in there.  
And Elenor Murray left this rotten place,  
Went to the war, came home and died, and proved  
She had the sense to leave so vile a world.



George Joslin ending up his days with dreams  
Of youth in Europe, travels, and with talk,  
Stirred to a recollection of a face  
He saw in Paris fifty years before,  
Because the face resembled Elenor Murray's,  
Explored his drawers and boxes, where he kept  
Mementos, treasures of the olden days.  
And found a pamphlet, came to Merival,  
With certain recollections, and with theories  
Of Elenor Murray: —

GEORGE JOSLIN ON LA MENKEN

GEORGE JOSLIN ON LA MENKEN

Here, Coroner Merival, look at this picture!  
Whom does it look like? Eyes too crystalline,  
A head like Byron's, tender mouth, and neck,  
Slender and white, a pathos as of smiles  
And tears kept back by courage. Yes, you know  
It looks like Elenor Murray.

Well, you see  
I read each day about the inquest — good!  
Dig out the truth, begin a system here  
Of making family records, let us see  
If we can do for people when we know  
How best to do it, what is done for stock.  
So build up Illinois, the nation too.  
I read about you daily. And last night  
When Elenor Murray's picture in the *Times*  
Looked at me, I began to think, Good Lord,  
Where have I seen that face before? I thought  
Through more than fifty years departed, sent  
My mind through Europe and America  
In all my travels, meetings, episodes.  
I could not think. At last I opened up  
A box of pamphlets, photographs, mementos,  
Picked up since 1860, and behold  
I find this pamphlet of La Belle Menken.  
Here is your Elenor Murray born again,  
As here might be your blackbird of this year

## DOMESDAY BOOK

With spots of red upon his wings, the same  
As last year's blackbird, like a pansy springing  
Out of the April of this year, repeating  
The color, form of one you saw last year.  
Repeating and the same, but not the same;  
No two alike, you know. I'll come to that.

Well, then, La Menken — as a boy in Paris  
I saw La Menken, I'll return to this.  
But just as Elenor Murray has her life  
Shadowed and symbolized by our Starved Rock —  
And everyone has something in his life  
Which takes him, makes him, is the image too  
Of fate prefigured — La Menken has Mazeppa,  
Her notable first part as actress, emblem  
Of spirit, character, and of omen too  
Of years to come, the thrill of life, the end.

Who is La Menken? Symbol of America,  
One phase of spirit! She was venturesome,  
Resourceful, daring, hopeful, confident,  
And as she wrote of self, a vagabond,  
A dweller in tents, a reveler, and a flame  
Aspiring but disreputable, coming up  
With leaves that shamed her stalk, could not be shed,  
But stuck out heavy veined and muddy hued  
In time of blossom. There are souls, you know,  
Who have shed shapeless immaturities,  
Betrayals of the seed before the blossom  
Comes to proclaim a beauty, a perfection;

## GEORGE JOSLIN ON LA MENKEN

Or risen with their stalk, until such leaves  
Were hidden in the grass or soil — not she,  
Nor even your Elenor Murray, as I read her.  
But being America and American,  
Brings good and bad together, blossom and leaves  
With prodigal recklessness, in vital health  
And unselective taste and vision mixed  
Of beauty and of truth.

Who was La Menken?

She's born in Louisiana in thirty-five,  
Left fatherless at seven — mother takes her  
And puts her in the ballet at New Orleans.  
She dances then from Texas clear to Cuba;  
Then gives up dancing, studies tragedy,  
And plays Bianca! Fourteen years of age  
Weds Menken, who's a Jew, divorced from him;  
Then falls in love with Heenan, pugilist.  
They quarrel and separate — it's in this pamphlet  
Just as I tell you; you can take it, Coroner.  
Now something happens, nothing in her birth  
Or place of birth to prophesy her life  
Like Starved Rock to this Elenor — being grown,  
A hand instead is darted from the curtain  
That hangs between to-day, to-morrow, sticks  
A symbol on her heart and whispers to her:  
You're this, my woman. Well, the thing was this:  
She played Mazeppa: take your dummy off,  
And lash me to the horse. They were afraid,  
But she prevailed, was nearly killed the first night,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And after that succeeded, was the rage  
And for her years remaining found herself  
Lashed to the wild horse of ungoverned will,  
Which ran and wandered, till she knew herself  
With stronger will than vision, passion stronger  
Than spirit to judge; the richness of the world,  
Love, beauty, living, greater than her power.  
And all the time she had the appetite  
To eat, devour it all. Grown sick at last,  
She diagnosed her case, wrote to a friend:  
The soul and body do not fit each other —  
A human spirit in a horse's flesh.  
This is your Elenor Murray, in a way.  
But to return to pansies, run your hand  
Over a bed of pansies; here's a pansy  
With petals stunted, here's another one  
All perfect but one petal, here's another  
Too streaked or mottled — all are pansies though.  
And here is one full petaled, strikes the eye  
With perfect color, markings. Elenor Murray  
Has something of the color and the form  
Of this La Menken, but is less a pansy,  
And Sappho, Rachel, Bernhardt are the flowers  
La Menken strove to be, and could not be,  
Ended with being only of their kind.  
And now there's pity for this Elenor Murray,  
And people wept when poor La Menken died.  
Both lived and had their way. I hate this pity,  
It makes you overlook there are two hours:  
The hour of joy, the hour of finding out



## GEORGE JOSLIN ON LA MENKEN

Your joy was all mistake, or led to pain.  
We who inspect these lives behold the pain,  
And see the error, do not keep in mind  
The hour of rapture, and the pride, indeed  
With which your Elenor Murrays and La Menkens  
Have lived that hour, elation, pride and scorn  
For any other way — “ this is the life ”  
I hear them say.

Well, now I go along.  
La Menken fills her purse with gold — she sends  
Her pugilist away, tries once again  
And weds a humorist, an Orpheus Kerr —  
And plays before the miners out in 'Frisco,  
And Sacramento, gathers in the eagles.  
She goes to Europe then — with husband? No!  
James Barkley is her fellow on the voyage.  
She lands in London, takes a gorgeous suite  
In London's grandest hostlery, entertains  
Charles Dickens, Prince Baerto and Charles Read,  
The Duke of Wellington and Swinburne, Sand  
And Jenny Lind; and has a liveried coachman;  
And for a crest a horse's head surmounting  
Four aces, if you please. And plays Mazeppa,  
And piles the money up.

Then next is Paris.  
And there I saw her, 1866,  
When Louis Napoleon and the King of Greece,  
The Prince Imperial were in a box.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

She wandered to Vienna, there was ill,  
Came back to Paris, died, a stranger's grave  
In Pere la Chaise was given, afterwards  
Exhumed in Mont Parnasse was buried, got  
A little stone with these words carved upon it:  
"Thou Knowest" meaning God knew, while herself  
Knew nothing of herself.

But when in Paris  
They sold her picture taken with her arms  
Around Dumas, and photographs made up  
Of postures ludicrous, obscene as well,  
Of her and great Dumas, I have them home.  
Can show you sometime. Well she loved Dumas,  
Inscribed a book of poems to Charles Dickens,  
By his permission, mark you — don't you see  
Your Elenor Murray here? This Elenor Murray  
A miniature imperfect of La Menken?  
She loved sensation, all her senses thrilled her;  
A delicate soul too weighted by the flesh;  
A coquette, quick of wit, intuitive,  
Kind, generous, unaffected, mystical,  
Teased by the divine in life, and melancholy,  
Of deep emotion sometimes. One has said  
She had a nature spiritual, religious  
Which warred upon the flesh and fell in battle;  
Just as your Elenor Murray joined the church,  
And did not keep the faith, if truth be told.

## GEORGE JOSLIN ON LA MENKEN

Now look, here is a letter in this pamphlet  
La Menken writes a poet — for she hunts  
For seers and for poets, lofty souls.  
And who does that? A woman wholly bad?  
Why no, a woman to be given life  
Fit for her spirit in another realm  
By God who will take notice, I believe.  
Now listen if you will! “I know your soul.  
It has met mine somewhere in starry space.  
And you must often meet me, vagabond  
Of fancy without aim, a dweller in tents  
Disreputable before the just. Just think  
I am a linguist, write some poems too,  
Can paint a little, model clay as well.  
And yet for all these gropings of my soul  
I am a vagabond, of little use.  
My body and my soul are in a scramble  
And do not fit each other — let them carve  
Those words upon my stone, but also these  
Thou Knowest, for God knows me, knows I love  
Whatever is good and beautiful in life;  
And that my soul has sought them without rest.  
Farewell, my friend, my spirit is with you,  
Vienna is too horrible, but know Paris  
Then die content.”

Now, Coroner Merival,  
You're not the only man who wants to see,  
Will work to make America a republic  
Of splendors, freedoms, happiness, success.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Though I am seventy-six, cannot do much,  
Save talk, as I am talking now, bring forth  
Proofs, revelations from the years I've lived.  
I care not how you view the lives of people,  
As pansy beds or what not, lift your faith  
So high above the pansy bed it sees  
The streaked and stunted pansies filling in  
The pattern that the perfect pansies outline,  
Therefore are smiling, even indifferent  
To this poor conscious pansy, dying at last  
Because it could not be the flower it wished.  
My heart to Elenor Murray and La Menken  
Goes out in sorrow, even while I know  
They shook their leaves in April, laughed and thrilled,  
And either did not know, or did not care  
The growing time was precious, and if wasted  
Could never be regained. Look at La Menken  
At seven years put in the ballet corps;  
And look at Elenor Murray getting smut  
Out of experience that made her wise.  
What shall we do about it? — let it go?  
And say there is no help, or say a republic,  
Set up a hundred years ago, raised to the helm  
Of rulership as president a list  
Of men more able than the emperors,  
Kings, rulers of the world, and statesmen too  
The equal of the greatest, money makers,  
And domineers of finance and economies  
Phenomenal in time — say, I repeat  
A country like this one must let its children

## GEORGE JOSLIN ON LA MENKEN

Waste as they wasted in the darker years  
Of Europe. Shall we let these trivial minds  
Who see salvation, progress in restraint,  
Pre-empt the field of moulding human life?  
Or shall we take a hand, and put our minds  
Upon the task, as recently we built  
An army for the war, equipped and fed it,  
An army better than all other armies,  
More powerful, more apt of hand and brain,  
Of thin tall youths, who did stop but said  
Like poor La Menken, strap me to the horse  
I'll do it if I die — so giving to peace  
The skill and genius which we use in war,  
Though it cost twenty billion, and why not?  
Why every dollar, every drop of blood  
For war like this to guard democracy,  
And not so much or more to build the land,  
Improve our blood, make individual  
America and her race? And first to rout  
Poverty and disease, give youth its chance,  
And therapeutic guidance. Soldier boys  
Have huts for recreation, clergymen,  
And is it more, less worth to furnish hands  
Intimate, hearts intimate for the use  
Of your La Menkens, Elenor Murrays, youths  
Who feel such vigor in their restless wings  
They tumble out of crowded nests and fly  
To fall in thickets, dash themselves against  
Walls, trees?

## DOMESDAY BOOK

I have a vision, Coroner,  
Of a new Republic, brighter than the sun,  
A new race, loftier faith, this land of ours  
Made over as to people, boys and girls,  
Conserved like forests, water power or mines;  
Watched, tested, put to best use, keen economies  
Practiced in spirits, waste of human life,  
Hope, aspiration, talent, virtues, powers,  
Avoided by a science, science of life,  
Of spirit, what you will. Enough of war,  
And billions for the flag — all well enough!  
Some billions now to make democracy  
Democracy in truth with us, and life  
Not helter-skelter, hitting as it may,  
And missing much, as this La Menken did.  
I'm not convinced we must have stunted pansies,  
That have no use but just to piece the pattern.  
Let's try, and if we try and fail, why then  
Our human duty ends, the God in us  
Will have it just this way, no other way.  
And then we may accept so poor a world,  
A republic so unfinished.

---

Will Paget is another writer of letters  
To Coroner Merival. The coroner  
Spends evenings reading letters, keeps a file  
Where he preserves them. And the blasphemy  
Of Paget makes him laugh. He has an evening  
And reads this letter to the jurymen:

## WILL PAGET ON DEMOS AND HOGOS

### WILL PAGET ON DEMOS AND HOGOS

To Coroner Merival, greetings, but a voice  
Dissentient from much that goes the rounds,  
Concerning Elenor Murray. Here's my word:  
Give men and women freedom, save the land  
From dull theocracy — the theo, what?  
A blend of Demos and Jehovah! Say,  
Bring back your despots, bring your Louis Fourteenth,  
And give them thrones of gold and ivory  
From where with leaded sceptres they may whack  
King Demos driven forth. You know the face?  
The temples are like sea shells, hollows out,  
Which narrow close the space for cortex cells.  
There would be little brow if hair remained;  
But hair is gone, because the dandruff came.  
The eyes are close together like a weasel's;  
The jaws are heavy, that is character;  
The mouth is thin and wide to gobble chicken;  
The paunch is heavy for the chickens eaten.  
Throned high upon a soap box Demos rules,  
And mumbles decalogues: Thou shalt not read,  
Save what I tell you, never books that tell  
Of men and women as they live and are.  
Thou shalt not see the dramas which portray  
The evil passions and satiric moods  
Which mock this Christian nation and its hope.  
Thou shalt not drink, not even wine or beer.  
Thou shalt not play at cards, or see the races.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Thou shalt not be divorced! Thou shalt not play.  
Thou shalt not bow to graven images  
Of beauty cut in marble, fused in bronze.  
Behold my name is Demos, King of Kings,  
My name is legion, I am many, come  
Out of the sea where many hogs were drowned,  
And now the ruler of hogocracy,  
Where in the name of freedom hungry snouts  
Root up the truffles in your great republic,  
And crunch with heavy jaws the legs and arms  
Of people who fall over in the pen.  
Hierarchies in my name are planted under  
Your states political to sprout and take  
The new world's soil,— religious freedom this! —  
Thought must be free — unless your thought objects  
To such dominion, and to literal faith  
In an old book that never had a place  
Except beside the Koran, Zarathustra.  
So here is your theocracy and here  
The land of Boredom. Do you wonder now  
That people cry for war? You see that God  
Frowns on all games but war. You shall not play  
Or kindle spirit with a rapture save  
A moral end's in view. All joy is sin,  
Where joy stands for itself alone, nor asks  
Consent to be, save for itself. But war  
Waged to put down the wrong, it's always that;  
To vindicate God's truths, all wars are such,  
Is game that lets the spirit play, is backed  
By God and moral reasons, therefore war,



## WILL PAGET ON DEMOS AND HOGOS

A game disguised as business, cosmic work  
For great millenniums, no less relieves  
The boredom of theocracies. But if  
Your men and women had the chance to play,  
Be free and spend superfluous energies,  
In what I call the greatest game, that's Life,  
Have life more freely, deeply, and you say  
How would you like a war and lose a leg,  
Or come from battle sick for all your years?  
You would say no, unless you saw an issue,  
Stripped clean of Christian twaddle, as we'll say  
The Greeks beheld the Persians. Well, behold  
All honest paganism in such things discarded  
For God who comes in glory, trampling presses  
Filled up with grapes of wrath.

Now hear me out:

I knew we'd have a war, it wasn't only  
That your hogocracy was grunting war  
We'd fight Japan, take Mexico — remember  
How dancing flourished madly in the land;  
Then think of savages who dance the Ghost Dance,  
And cattle lowing, rushing in a panic,  
There's psychic secrets here. But then at last  
What can you do with life? You're well and strong,  
Flushed with desire, mad with appetites,  
You turn this way and find a sign forbidden,  
You turn that way and find the door is closed.  
Hogocracy, King Demos say, go back,  
Find work, develop character, restrain,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Draw up your belt a little tighter, hunger  
And thirst diminish with a tighter belt.  
And none to say, take off the belt and eat,  
Here's water for you.

Well, you have a war.  
We used to say in foot ball kick their shins,  
And gouge their eyes out — when our shins were kicked  
We hollered foul and ouch. There was the south  
Who called us mud-sills in this freer north,  
And mouthed democracy; and as for that  
Their churches made of God a battle leader,  
An idea come from Palestine; oh, yes,  
They soon would wipe us up, they were the people.  
But when we slaughtered them they hollered ouch.  
And why not? For a gun and uniform,  
And bands that play are rapturous enough.  
But when you get a bullet through the heart,  
The game is not so funny as it was.  
That's why I hated Germany and hate her,  
And feel we could not let this German culture  
Spread over earth. That culture was but this:  
Life must have an expression and a game,  
And war's the game, besides the prize is great  
In land and treasure, commerce, let us play.  
It lets the people's passions have a vent  
When fires of life burn hot and hotter under  
The kettle and the lid is clamped by work,  
Dull duty, daily routine, inhibitions.  
Before this Elenor Murray woke to life

## WILL PAGET ON DEMOS AND HOGOS

LeRoy was stirring, but the stir was play.  
It was a Gretna Green, and pleasure boats  
Ran up and down the river — on the streets  
You heard the cry of barkers, in the park  
The band was playing, and you heard the ring  
Of registers at fountains and buffets.  
All this was shabby maybe, but observe  
There are those souls who see the wrath of God  
As blackest background to the light of soul:  
And when the thunder rumbles and the storm  
Comes up with lightning then they say to men  
Who laugh in bar-rooms, “ Have a care, blasphemers,  
You may be struck by lightning ”— here’s the root  
From which this mood ascetic comes to leaf  
In all theocracies, and throws a shadow  
Upon all freedom.

Look at us to-day.

They say to me, see what a town we have:  
The men at work, smoke coming from the chimneys,  
The banks full up of money, business good,  
The workmen sober, going home at night,  
No rowdy barkers and no bands a-playing,  
No drinking and no gaming and no vice.  
No marriages contracted to be broken.  
Look how LeRoy is quiet, sane and clean!  
And I reply, you like the stir of work,  
But not the stir of play; your chimneys smoke,  
Your banks have money. Let me look behind  
The door that closes on your man at home,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The wife and children there, what shall I find?  
A sick man looks to health as it were all,  
But when the fever leaves him and he feels  
The store of strength in muscles slumbering  
And waiting to be used, then something else  
Than health is needful, he must have a way  
To voice the life within him, and he wonders  
Why health seemed so desirable before,  
And all sufficient to him.

Take this girl:  
Why do you marvel that she rode at night  
With any man who came along? Good God,  
If I were born a woman and they put me  
In a theocracy, hogocracy,  
I'd do the first thing that came in my mind  
To give my soul expression. Don't you think  
You're something of a bully and a coward  
To ask such model living from this girl  
When you, my grunting hogos, run the land  
And bring us scandals like the times of Grant,  
And poisoned beef sold to the soldier boys,  
When we were warring Spain, and all this stuff  
Concerning loot and plunder, malversation,  
That riots in your cities, printed daily?  
I roll the panoramic story out  
To Washington the great — what do I see?  
It's tangle foot, the sticky smear is dry;  
But I can find wings, legs and heads, remember  
How little flies and big were buzzing once

## WILL PAGET ON DEMOS AND HOGOS

Of God and duty, country, virtue, faith ;  
And beating wings, already gummed with sweet,  
Until their little bellies touched the glue,  
They sought to fill their bellies with — at last  
Long silence, which is history, scroll rolled up  
And spoken of in sacred whispers.

Well,  
I'm glad that Elenor Murray had her fling,  
If that be really true. I understand  
What drove her to the war. I think she knew  
Too much to marry, settle down and live  
Under the rule of Demos or of Hogos.  
I wish we had a dozen Elenor Murrays  
In every village in this land of Demos  
To down Theocracy, which is just as bad  
As Prussianism, is no different  
From Prussianism. And I fear but this  
As fruitage of the war: that men and women  
Will have burnt on their souls the words ceramic  
That war's the thing, and this theocracy,  
Where generous outlets for the soul are stopped  
Will keep the words in mind. When boredom comes,  
And grows intolerable, you'll see the land  
Go forth to war to get a thrill and live —  
Unless we work for freedom, for delight  
And self-expression.

---

Dwight Henry is another writer of letters,  
Stirred by the Murray inquest; writes a screed

## DOMESDAY BOOK

“The House that Jack Built,” read by Merival  
To entertain his jury, in these words:

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### THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

Why don't they come to me to find the cause  
Of Elenor Murray's death? The house is first;  
That is the world, and Jack is God, you know;  
The malt is linen, purple, wine and food,  
The rats that get the malt are nobles, lords,  
Those who had feudal dues and hunting rights,  
And privileges, first nights, all the rest.  
The cats are your Voltaires, Rousseaus; the dogs,  
Your jailers, Louis, Fredericks and such.  
And O, you blessed cow, you common people,  
Whom maidens all forlorn attend and milk.  
Here is your Elenor Murray who gives hands,  
Brain, heart and spirit to the task of milking,  
And straining milk that other lips may drink,  
Revive and flourish, wedding, if she weds,  
The tattered man in church, which is your priest  
Shaven and shorn, and wakened with the sun  
By the cock, theology that keeps the house  
Well timed and ruled for honor unto Jack,  
Who must have order, rising on the hour,  
And ceremony for his house.

## THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

If rats

Had never lived, or left the malt alone,  
This girl had lived. Let's trace the story down:  
We went to France to fight, we go to France  
To get the origin of Elenor's death.  
It's 1750, say, the malt of France  
And Europe, too, is over-run by rats;  
The nobles and the clergy own the land,  
Exact the taxes, drink the luscious milk  
Of the crumpled horns. But cats come slinking by  
Called Diderot, Voltaire, Rousseau. Now look!  
Cat Diderot goes after war and taxes,  
The slave trade, privilege, the merchant stomach.  
In England, too, there is a sly grimalkin,  
Who poisons rats with most malicious thoughts,  
And bears the name of Adam — Adam Smith,  
By Jack named Adam just to signify  
His sinful nature. But the cat Voltaire  
Says Adam never fell, that man is good,  
An honest merchant better than a king,  
And shaven priests are worse than parasites.  
He rubs his glossy coat against the legs  
Of Quakers, loving natures, loathes the trade  
Of war, and runs with velvet feet across  
The whole of Europe, scaring rats to death.  
The cat Rousseau is instinct like a cat,  
And purrs that man born free is still in chains  
Here in this house that Jack built. Consequence?  
There is such squeaking, running of the rats,  
The cats in North America wake up

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And drive the English rats out; then the dogs  
Grow cautious of the cats, poor simple Louis  
Convokes a French assembly to preserve  
The malt against the rats and give the cow  
Whose milk is growing blue and thin some malt.  
And all at once rats, cats and dogs, the cow,  
The shaven priest, the maiden all forlorn,  
The tattered man, the cock, are in a hubbub  
Of squeaking, caterwauling, barking, lowing,  
With cock-a-doodles, curses, prayers and shrieks  
Ascending from the melee. In a word,  
You have a revolution.

All at once

A mastiff dog appears and barks: "Be still."  
And in a way in France's room in the house  
Brings order for a time. He grabs the fabric  
Of the Holy Roman Empire, tears it up,  
Sends for the shaven priest from Rome and bites  
His shrunken calves; trots off to Jena where  
He whips the Prussian dogs, but wakes them too  
To breed and multiply, grow strong to fight  
All other dogs in Jack's house, bite to death  
The maidens all forlorn, like Elenor Murray.

This mastiff, otherwise Napoleon called,  
Is downed at last by dogs from everywhere.  
They're rid of him — but still the house of Jack  
Is better than it was, the rats are thick,  
But cats grow more abundant, malt is served



## THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

More generously to the cow. The Prussian dogs  
Discover malt's the thing, also the cow  
Must have her malt, or else the milk gives out.  
But all the while the Prussian dogs grow strong,  
Well taught and angered by Napoleon.  
And some of them would set the house in order  
After the manner of America.  
But many wish to fight, get larger rooms,  
Then set the whole in order. At Sadowa  
They whip the Austrian dogs, and once again  
A mastiff comes, a Bismarck, builds a suite  
From north to south, and forces Austria  
To huddle in the kitchen, use the outhouse  
Where Huns and Magyars, Bulgars and the rest  
Keep Babel under Jack who split their tongues  
To make them hate each other and suspect,  
Not understanding what the other says.  
This very Babel was the cause of death  
Of Elenor Murray, if I chose to stop  
And go no further with the story.

Next

Our mastiff Bismarck thinks of Luneville,  
And would avenge it, grabs the throat of France,  
And downs her ; at Versailles growls and carries  
An emperor of Germany to the throne.  
Then pants and wags his tail, and little dreams  
A dachshund in an early day to come  
Will drive him from the kennel and the bone  
He loves to crunch and suck.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

This dachshund is

In one foot crippled, rabies from his sires  
Lies dormant in him, in a day of heat  
Froth from his mouth will break, his eyes will roll  
Like buttons made of pearl with glints of green.  
Already he feels envy of the dogs  
Who wear brass collars, bay the moon of Jack,  
And roam at will about the house of Jack,  
The English, plainer said. This envy takes  
The form of zeal for country, so he trots  
About the house, gets secrets for reforms  
For Germany, would have his lesser dogs  
All merchants, traders sleek and prosperous,  
Achieve a noble breed to rule the house.  
And so he puts his rooms in order, while  
The other dogs look on with much concern  
And growing fear.

The business of the house

In every room is over malt; the cow  
Must be well fed for milk. And if you have  
No feudal dues, outlandish taxes, still  
The game of old goes on, has only changed  
Its dominant form. Grimalkin, Adam Smith  
Spied all the rats, and all the tricks of rats,  
Saw in his day the rats crawl hawser ropes  
And get on ships, embark for Indias,  
And get the malt; and now the merchant ships  
For China bound, for Africa, for the Isles  
Of farthest seas take rats, who slip aboard

## THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

And eat their fill before the patient cow,  
Milked daily as before can lick her tongue  
Against a mouthful of the precious stuff.  
You have your eastern question, and your Congo.  
France wants Morocco, gives to Germany  
Possessions in the Congo for Morocco.  
The dogs jump into China, even we  
Take part and put the Boxers down, lay hands  
Upon the Philippines, and Egypt falls  
To England, all are building battle ships.  
The dachshund barking he is crowded out,  
Encircled, as he says, builds up the army,  
And patriot cocks are crowing everywhere,  
Until the house of Jack with snarls and growls,  
The fuff, fuff, fuff of cats seems on the eve  
Of pandemonium. The Germans think  
The Slavs want Europe, and the Slavs are sure  
The Germans want it, and it's all for malt.  
Meantime the Balkan Babel leads to war.  
The Slavic peoples do not like the rule  
Of Austro-Hungary, but the latter found  
No way except to rule the Slavs and rule  
Southeastern Europe, being crowded out  
By mastiff Bismarck. And again there's Jack  
Who made confusion of the Balkan tongues.  
And so the house awaits events that look  
As if Jack willed them, anyway a thing  
That may be put on Jack. It comes at last.  
All have been armed for malt. A crazy man  
Has armed himself and shoots a king to be,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The Archduke Francis, on the Serbian soil,  
Then Austria moves on Serbia, Russia moves  
To succor Serbia, France is pledged to help  
The Russians, but our dachshund has a bond  
With Austria and rushes to her aid.  
Then England must protect the channel, yes,  
France must be saved — and here you have your war.

And now for Elenor Murray. Top of brain  
Where ideals float like clouds, we owed to France  
A debt, but had we paid it, if the dog,  
The dachshund, mad at last, had left our ships  
To freedom of the seas? Say what you will,  
This England is the smartest thing in time,  
Can never fall, be conquered while she keeps  
That mind of hers, those eyes that see all things,  
Spies or no spies, knows every secret hatched  
In every corner of the house of Jack.  
And with one language spoken by more souls  
Than any tongue, leads minds by written words;  
Writes treaties, compacts which forstall the sword,  
And makes it futile when it's drawn against her. . . .  
You cuff your enemy at school or make  
A naso-digital gesture, coming home  
You fear your enemy, so walk beside  
The gentle teacher; if your enemy  
Throws clods at you, he hits the teacher. Well,  
'Twas wise to hide munitions back of skirts,  
And frocks of little children, most unwise  
For Dachshund William to destroy the skirts

## THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

And frocks to sink munitions, since the wearers  
Happened to be Americans. William fell  
Jumping about his room and spilled the clock,  
Raked off the mantel; broke his billikens,  
His images of Jack by doing this.  
For, seeing this, we rise; ten million youths  
Take guns for war, and many Elenor Murrays  
Swept out of placid places by the ripples  
Cross seas to serve.

This girl was French in part,  
In spirit was American. Look back  
Do you not see Voltaire lay hold of her,  
Hands out of tombs and spirits, from the skies  
Lead her to Europe? Trace the causes back  
To Adam, or the dwellers of the lakes,  
It is enough to see the souls that stirred  
The Revolution of the French which drove  
The ancient evils from the house of Jack.  
It is enough to hope that from this war  
The vestiges of feudal wrongs shall lie  
In Jack's great dust-pan, swept therein and thrown  
In garbage cans by maidens all forlorn,  
The Fates we'll call them now, lame goddesses,  
Hags halt, far sighted, seeing distant things,  
Near things but poorly — this is much to hope!  
But if we get a freedom that is free  
For Elenor Murrays, maidens all forlorn,  
And tattered men, and so prevent the wars,  
Already budding in this pact of peace,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

This war is good, and Elenor Murray's life  
Not waste, but gain.

Now for a final mood,  
As it were second sight. I open the door,  
Walk from the house of Jack, look at the roof,  
The chimneys, over them see depths of blue.  
Jack's house becomes a little ark that sails,  
Tosses and bobbles in an infinite sea.  
And all events of evil, war and strife,  
The pain and folly, test of this and that,  
The groping from one thing to something else,  
Old systems turned to new, old eras dead,  
New eras rising, these are ripples all  
Moving from some place in the eternal sea  
Where Jack is throwing stones,— these ripples lap  
Against the house of Jack, or toss it so  
The occupants go reeling here and there,  
Laugh, scowl, grow sick, tread on each other's toes.  
While all the time the sea is most concerned  
With tides and currents, little with the house,  
Ignore this Elenor Murray or Voltaire,  
Who living and who dying reproduce  
Ripples upon the pools of time and place,  
That knew them; and so on where neither eye  
Nor mind can trace the ripples vanishing  
In ether, realms of spirit, what you choose!

---

Now on a day when Merival was talking  
More evidence at the inquest, he is brought

## THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

The card of Mary Black, associate  
Of Elenor Murray in the hospital  
Of France, and asks the coroner to hear  
What Elenor Murray suffered in the war.  
And Merival consents and has her sworn;  
She testifies as follows to the jury:

Poor girl, she had an end! She seems to me  
A torch stuck in a bank of clay, snuffed out,  
Her warmth and splendor wasted. Never girl  
Had such an ordeal and a fate before.  
She was the lucky one at first, and then  
Evils and enemies flocked down upon her,  
And beat her to the earth.

But when we sailed  
You never saw so radiant a soul,  
While most of us were troubled, for you know  
Some were in gloom, had quarreled with their beaux,  
Who did not say farewell. And there were some  
Who talked for weeks ahead of seeing beaux  
And having dinners with them who missed out.

We were a tearful, a deserted lot.  
And some were apprehensive — well you know!  
But Elenor, she had a beau devoted  
Who sent her off with messages and love,  
And comforts for her service in the war.  
And so her face was lighted, she was gay,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And said to us: " How wonderful it is  
To serve, to nurse, to play our little part  
For country, for democracy." And to me  
She said: " My heart is brimming over with love.  
Now I can work and nurse, now use my hands  
To soothe and heal, which burn to finger tips,  
With flame for service."

Oh she had the will,  
The courage, resolution; but at last  
They broke her down. And this is how it was:  
Her love for someone gave her zeal and grace  
For watching, working, caring for the sick.  
Her heart was in the cause too — but this love  
Gave beauty, passion to it. All her men  
Stretched out to kiss her hands. It may be true  
The wounded soldier is a grateful soul.  
But in her case they felt a warmer flame,  
A greater tenderness. So she won her spurs,  
And honors, was beloved, she had a brain,  
A fine intelligence. Then at the height  
Of her success, she disobeyed a doctor —  
He was a pigmy — Elenor knew more  
Than he did, but you know the discipline:  
War looses all the hatreds, meanest traits  
Together with the noblest, so she crumpled,  
Was disciplined for this. About this time  
A letter to the head nurse came — there was  
A Miriam Fay, who by some wretched fate  
Was always after Elenor — it was she



## THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

Who wrote the letter, and the letter said  
To keep a watch on Elenor, lest she snag  
Some officer or soldier. Elenor,  
Who had no caution, venturesome and brave,  
Wrote letters more than frank to one she loved  
Whose tenor leaked out through the censorship.  
Her lover sent her telegrams, all opened,  
And read first by the head nurse. So at last  
Too much was known, and Elenor was eyed,  
And whispers ran around. Those ugly girls,  
Who never had a man, were wagging tongues,  
And still her service was so radiant,  
So generous and skillful she survived,  
Helped by the officers, the leading doctors,  
Who liked her and defended her, perhaps  
In hopes of winning her — you know the game!  
It was through them she went to Nice; but when  
She came back to her duty all was ready  
To catch her and destroy her — envy played  
Its part, as you can see.

Our unit broke,  
And some of us were sent to Germany,  
And some of us to other places — all  
Went with some chum, associate. But Elenor,  
Who was cut off from every one she knew,  
And shipped out like an animal to be  
With strangers, nurses, doctors, wholly strange.  
The head nurse passed the word along to watch her.  
And thus it was her spirit, once aflame

## DOMESDAY BOOK

For service and for country, fed and brightened  
By love for someone, thus was left to burn  
In darkness and in filth.

The hospital  
Was cold, the rain poured, and the mud was frightful —  
Poor Elenor was writing me — the food  
Was hardly fit to eat. To make it worse  
They put her on night duty for a month.  
Smallpox broke out and they were quarantined.  
A nurse she chose to be her friend was stricken  
With smallpox, died and left her all alone.  
One rainy morning she heard guns and knew  
A soldier had been stood against the wall.  
He was a boy from Texas, driven mad  
By horror and by drink, had killed a Frenchman.  
She had the case of crazy men at night,  
And one of them got loose and knocked her down,  
And would have killed her, had an orderly  
Not come in time. And she was cold at night,  
Sat bundled up so much she scarce could walk  
There in that ward on duty. Everywhere  
They thwarted her and crossed her, she was nagged,  
Brow-beaten, driven, hunted and besought  
For favors, for the word was well around  
She was the kind who could be captured — false,  
The girl was good whatever she had done.  
All this she suffered, and her lover now  
Had cast her off, it seems, had ceased to write,

## THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

Had gone back to America — even then  
They did not wholly break her.

But I ask  
What soldier or what nurse retained his faith,  
The splendor of his flame? I wish to God  
They'd pass a law and make it death to write  
Or speak of war as glory, or as good.  
What good can come of hatred, greed and murder?  
War licenses these passions, legalizes  
All infamies. They talk of cruelties —  
We shot the German captives — and I nursed  
A boy who shot a German, with two others  
Rushed on the fallen fellow, ran him through,  
Through eyes and throat with bayonets. The world  
Is better, is it? And if Indians scalped  
Our women for the British, and if Sherman  
Cut through the south with sword and flame, to-day  
Such terrors should not be, we are improved!  
Yes, hate and lust have changed, and maniac rage,  
And rum has lost its potency to fire  
A nerve that sickens at the bloody work  
Where men are butchered as you shoot and slash  
An animal for food!

Well, now suppose  
The preachers who preach Jesus meek and mild,  
But fulminate for slaughter, when the game  
Of money turns its thumbs down; if your statesmen  
With hardened arteries and hardened hearts,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Who make a cult of patriotism, gain  
Their offices and livelihood thereby;  
Your emperors and kings and chancellors,  
Who glorify themselves and win sometimes  
Lands for their people; and your editors  
Who whip the mob to fury, bellies fat,  
Grown cynical, and rich, who cannot lose,  
No matter what we suffer — if we nurses,  
And soldiers fail; your patriotic shouters  
Of murder and of madness, von Bernhardis,  
Treitschkes, making pawns of human life  
To shape a destiny they can't control —  
Your bankers and your merchants — all the gang  
Who shout for war and pay the orators,  
Arrange the music — if I say — this crowd  
Finds us, the nurses and the soldiers, cold,  
Our fire of youth and faith beyond command,  
Too wise to be enlisted or enslaved,  
What will they do who shout for war so much?

And haven't we, the nurses and the soldiers  
Written some million stories for the eyes  
Of boys and girls to read these fifty years?  
And if they read and understand, no war  
Can come again. They can't have war without  
The spirit of your Elenor Murrays — no!

---

So Mary Black went on, and Merival  
Gave liberty to her to talk her mind.  
The jury smiled or looked intense for words

## THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

So graphic of the horrors of the war.  
Then David Barrow asked: "Who is the man  
That used to write to Elenor, went away?"  
And Mary Black replied, "We do not know;  
I do not know a girl who ever knew.  
I only know that Elenor wept and grieved,  
And did her duty like a little soldier.  
It was some man who came to France, because  
The word went round he had gone back, and left  
The service, or the service there in France  
Had left. Some said he'd gone to England, some  
America. He must have been an American,  
Or rather in America when she sailed,  
Because she went off happy. In New York  
Saw much of him before we sailed."

And then

The Reverend Maiworm juryman spoke up —  
This Mary Black had left the witness chair —  
And asked if Gregory Wenner went to France.  
The coroner thought not, but would inquire.

---

Jane Fisher was a friend of Elenor Murray's  
And held the secret of a pack of letters  
Which Elenor Murray left. And on a day  
She talks with Susan Hamilton, a friend.  
Jane Fisher has composed a letter to  
A lawyer in New York, who has the letters —  
At least it seems so — and to get the letters,  
And so fulfill the trust which Elenor

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Had left to Jane. Meantime the coroner  
Had heard somehow about the letters, or  
That Jane knows something — she is anxious now,  
And in a flurry, does not wish to go  
Down to LeRoy and tell her story. So  
She talks with Susan Hamilton like this:

---

### JANE FISHER

Jane Fisher says to Susan Hamilton,  
That Coroner has no excuse to bring  
You, me before him. There are many too  
Who could throw light on Elenor Murray's life  
Besides the witnesses he calls to tell  
The cause of death: could he call us and hear  
About the traits we know, he should have us.  
What do we know of Elenor Murray's death?  
Why, not a thing, unless her death began  
With Simeon Strong and Gregory Wenner — then  
I could say something, for she told me much  
About her plan to marry Simeon Strong,  
And could have done so but for Gregory Wenner,  
Whose fault of life combined with fault of hers  
To break the faith of Simeon Strong in her.  
And so what have we? Gregory Wenner's love  
Poisons the love of Simeon Strong, from that  
Poor Elenor Murray falls into decline;  
From that, re-acts to nursing and religion,  
Which leads her to the war; and from the war

## JANE FISHER

Some other causes come, I know not what;  
I wish I knew. And Elenor Murray dies,  
Is killed or has a normal end of life.

But, Susan, Elenor Murray feasted richly  
While life was with her, spite of all the pain.  
If you could choose, be Elenor Murray or  
Our schoolmate, Mary Marsh, which would you be?  
Elenor Murray had imagination,  
And courage to sustain it; Mary Marsh  
Had no imagination, was afraid,  
Could not envision life in Europe, married  
And living there in England, threw her chance  
Away to live in England, was content,  
And otherwise not happy but to lift  
Her habitation from the west of town  
And settle on the south side, wed a man  
Whose steadiness and business sense made sure  
A prosperous uniformity of life.  
Life does not enter at your door and seek you,  
And pour her gifts into your lap. She drops  
The chances and the riches here and there.  
They find them who fly forth, as faring birds  
Know northern marshes, rice fields in the south;  
While the dull turtle waddles in his mud.  
The bird is slain perhaps, the turtle lives,  
But which has known the thrills?

Well, on a time

Elenor Murray, Janet Stearns, myself

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## DOMESDAY BOOK

Thought we would see Seattle and Vancouver,  
We had saved money teaching school that year —  
The plan was Elenor Murray's. So we sailed  
To 'Frisco from Los Angeles, saw 'Frisco  
By daylight, but to see the town by night  
Was Elenor Murray's wish, and up to now  
We had no men, had found none. Elenor said,  
" Let's go to Palo Alto, find some men."  
We landed in a blinding sun, and walked  
About the desolate campus, but no men.  
And Janet and myself were tired and hot ;  
But Elenor, who never knew fatigue,  
Went searching here and there, and left us sitting  
Under a palm tree waiting. Hours went by,  
Two hours, I think, when she came down the walk  
A man on either side. She brought them up  
And introduced them. They were gay and young,  
Students with money. Then the fun began :  
We wished to see the place, must hurry back  
To keep engagements in the city — whew !  
How Elenor Murray baited hooks for us  
With words about the city and our plans ;  
What fun we three had had already there !  
Until at last these fellows begged to come,  
Return with us to 'Frisco, be allowed  
To join our party. " Could we manage it ? "  
Asked Elenor Murray, " do you think we can ? "  
We fell into the play and talked it over,  
Considered this and that, resolved the thing,  
And said at last to come, and come they did. . . .



## JANE FISHER

Well, such a time in 'Frisco. For you see  
Our money had been figured down to cents  
For what we planned to do. These fellows helped,  
We scarcely had seen 'Frisco but for them.  
They bought our dinners, paid our way about  
Through China Town and so forth, but we kept  
Our staterooms on the boat, slept on the boat.  
And after three days' feasting sailed away  
With bouquets for each one of us.

But this girl

Could never get enough, must on and on  
See more, have more sensations, never tired.  
And when we saw Vancouver then the dream  
Of going to Alaska entered her.  
I had no money, Janet had no money  
To help her out, and Elenor was short.  
We begged her not to try it — what a will!  
She set her jaw and said she meant to go.  
And when we missed her for a day, behold  
We find her, she's a cashier in a store,  
And earning money there to take the trip.  
Our boat was going back, we left her there.  
I see her next when school commences, ruling  
Her room of pupils at Los Angeles.  
The summer after this she wandered east,  
Was now engaged to Simeon Strong, but writing  
To Gregory Wenner, saw him in Chicago.  
She traveled to New York, he followed her.  
She was a girl who had to live her life,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Could not live through another, found no man  
Whose life sufficed for hers, must live herself,  
Be individual.

And en route for France  
She wrote me from New York, was seeing much  
Of Margery, an aunt — I never knew her,  
But sensed an evil in her, and a mind  
That used the will of Elenor Murray — how  
Or why, I knew not. But she wrote to me  
This Margery had brought her lawyer in,  
There in New York to draw a document,  
And put some letters in a safety box.  
Whose letters? Gregory Wenner's? I don't know.  
She told me much of secrets, but of letters  
That needed for their preciousness a box,  
A lawyer to arrange the matter, nothing.  
For if there was another man, she felt  
Too shamed, no doubt, to tell me: —“ This is he,  
The love I sought, the great reality,”  
When she had said as much of Gregory Wenner.  
But now a deeper matter: with this letter  
She sent a formal writing giving me  
Charge of these letters, if she died to give  
The letters to the writer. I'm to know  
The identity of the writer, so she planned  
When I obtain them. How about this lawyer,  
And Margery the aunt? What shall I do?  
Write to this lawyer what my duty is  
Appointed me of her, go to New York?



## DOMESDAY BOOK

Oh well, my friend,  
We wonder at each other, I at you,  
And you at me, for doing this or that.  
And yet I think no man or woman acts  
Without a certain logic in the act  
Of nature or of circumstance.

Look here,  
This letter to the lawyer. Will it do?  
I think so. If it brings the letters — well!  
If not, I'll get them somehow, it must be,  
I loved her, faults and all, and so did you. . . .

So while Jane Fisher pondered on her duty,  
But didn't write the letter to the lawyer,  
Who had the charge of Elenor Murray's letters,  
The lawyer, Henry Baker, in New York  
Finds great perplexity. Sometimes a case  
Walks in a lawyer's office, makes his future,  
Or wrecks his health, or brings him face to face  
With some one rising from the mass of things,  
Faces and circumstance, that ends his life.  
So Henry Baker took such chances, taking  
The custody of these letters.

James Rex Hunter  
Is partner of this Baker, sees at last  
Merival and tells him how it was  
With Baker at the last; he died because  
Of Elenor Murray's letters, Hunter told

HENRY BAKER, AT NEW YORK

The coroner at the Waldorf. Dramatized  
His talk with Lawyer Baker in these words: —

---

HENRY BAKER, AT NEW YORK

One partner may consult another — James,  
Here is a matter you must help me with,  
It's coming to a head.

Well, to be plain,  
And to begin at the beginning first,  
I knew a woman up on Sixty-third,  
Have known her since I got her a divorce,  
Married, divorced, before — last night we quarreled,  
I must do something, hear me and advise.

She is a woman notable for eyes  
Bright for their oblong lights in them; they seem  
Like crockery vases, rookwood, where the light  
Shows spectrally almost in squares and circles.  
Her skin is fair, nose hooked, of amorous flesh,  
A feaster and a liver, thinks and plans  
Of money, how to get it. And this husband  
Whom she divorced last summer went away,  
And left her to get on as best she could.  
All legal matters settled, we went driving —  
This story can be skipped.



## HENRY BAKER, AT NEW YORK

In her control for something, has begun  
To use her, manage her, is coiling her  
With dominant will or cunning. Then I look,  
See Margery Camp observing Elenor Murray,  
Who drinks the absinthe, and in Margery's eyes  
I see these parallelograms of light  
Just like a vase of crockery, there she stands,  
Her face like ivory, and laughs and shows  
Her marvelous teeth, smooths with her shapely hands  
The skirt upon her hips. Somehow I feel  
She is a soul who watches passion work.  
Then Elenor Murray rouses, gets her spirits  
Out of the absinthe, rises and exclaims:  
"I'm better now;" and Margery Camp speaks up,  
Poor child, in intonation like a doll  
That speaks from reeds of steel, no sympathy  
Or meaning in the words. The interview  
Seems spooky to me, cold and sinister.  
We drink again and then we drink again.  
And what with her fatigue and lowered spirits,  
This Elenor Murray drifts in talk and mood  
With so much drink. At last this Margery Camp  
Says suddenly: "You'll have to help my niece,  
There is a matter you must manage for her,  
We've talked it over; in a day or two  
Before she goes away, we'll come to you."  
I took them out to dinner, after dinner  
Drove Margery Camp to her apartment, then  
Went down with Elenor Murray to her place.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Then in a day or two, one afternoon  
Margery Camp and Elenor Murray came  
Here to my office with a bundle, which  
This Margery Camp was carrying, rather large.  
And Margery Camp was bright and keen as winter.  
But Elenor Murray seemed a little dull,  
Abstracted as of drink, or thought perhaps.  
After the greeting and preliminaries,  
Margery said to Elenor: " Better tell  
What we have come for, get it done and go."  
Then Elenor Murray said: " Here are some letters,  
I've tied them in this package, and I wish  
To put them in a safety box, give you  
One key and keep the other, leave with you  
A sealed instruction, which, in case I die,  
While over-seas, you may break open, read  
And follow, if you will." She handed me  
A writing signed by her which merely read  
What I have told you — here it is — you see:  
" When legal proof is furnished I am dead,  
Break open the sealed letter which will give  
Instruction for you." So I took the trust,  
Went with these women to a vault and placed  
The letters in the box, gave her a key,  
Kept one myself. They left. At dinner time  
I joined them, saw more evidence of the will  
Of Margery Camp controlling Elenor's.  
Which seemed in part an older woman's power  
Against a younger woman's, and in part  
Something less innocent. We ate and drank,



## HENRY BAKER, AT NEW YORK

I took them to their places as before,  
And didn't see this Elenor again.

But now last night when I see Margery  
She says at once, " My niece is dead ; " goes on  
To say, no other than herself has care  
Or interest in her, was estranged from father,  
And mother too, herself the closest heart  
In all the world, and therefore she must look  
After the memory of the niece, and adds :  
" She came to you through me, I picked you out  
To do this business." So she went along  
With this and that, advancing and retreating  
To catch me, bind me. Well, I saw her game,  
Sat non-committal, sipping wine, but keeping  
The wits she hoped I'd lose, as I could see.

After the dinner we went to her place  
And there she said these letters might contain  
Something to smudge the memory of her niece,  
She wished she had insisted on the plan  
Of having one of the keys, the sealed instruction  
Made out and left with her ; being her aunt,  
The closest heart in the world to Elenor Murray,  
That would have been the right way. But she said  
Her niece was willful and secretive, too,  
Not over wise, but now that she was dead  
It was her duty to reform the plan,  
Do what was best, and take control herself.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

So working to the point by devious ways  
She said at last: "You must give me the key,  
The sealed instruction: I'll go to the box,  
And get the letters, do with them as Elenor  
Directed in the letter; for I think,  
Cannot believe it different, that my niece  
Has left these letters with me, so directs  
In that sealed letter." "Then if that be true,  
Why give the key to me, the letter?—no  
This is a trust, a lawyer would betray,  
A sacred trust to do what you request."  
I saw her growing angry. Then I added:  
"I have no proof your niece is dead:" "My word  
Is good enough," she answered, "we are friends,  
You are my lover, as I thought; my word  
Should be sufficient." And she kept at me  
Until I said: "I can't give you the key,  
And if I did they would not let you in,  
You are not registered as a deputy  
To use the key." She did not understand,  
Did not believe me, but she tacked about,  
And said: "You can do this, take me along  
When you go to the vault and open the box,  
And break the letter open which she gave."  
I only answered: "If I find your niece  
Has given these letters to you, you shall have  
The letters, but I think the letters go  
Back to the writer, and if that's the case,  
I'll send them to the writer."

## HENRY BAKER, AT NEW YORK

Here at last  
She lost control, took off her mask and stormed:  
"We'll see about it. You will scarcely care  
To have the matter aired in court. I'll see  
A lawyer, bring a suit and try it out,  
And see if I, the aunt, am not entitled  
To have my niece's letters and effects,  
Whatever's in the package. I am tired  
And cannot see you longer. Take five days  
To think the matter over. If you come  
And do what I request, no suit, but if  
You still refuse, the courts can settle it."  
And so I left her.

In a day or two  
I read of Elenor Murray's death. It seems  
The coroner investigates her death.  
She died mysteriously. Well, then I break  
The sealed instruction, look! I am to send  
The package to Jane Fisher in Chicago.  
We know, of course, Jane Fisher did not write  
The letters, that the letters are a man's.  
What is the inference? Why, that Elenor Murray  
Pretended to comply, obey her aunt,  
Yet slipped between her fingers, did not wish  
The aunt or me to know who wrote the letters.  
Feigned full submission, frankness with the aunt,  
Yet hid her secret, hid it from the aunt  
Beyond her finding out, if I observe

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The trust imposed, keep hands of Margery Camp  
From getting at the letters.

Now two things:

Suppose the writer of the letters killed  
This Elenor Murray, is somehow involved  
In Elenor Murray's death? If that's the case,  
Should not these letters reach the coroner?  
To help enforce the law is higher trust  
Than doing what a client has commanded.  
And secondly, if Margery Camp should sue,  
My wife will learn the secret, bring divorce.  
Three days remain before the woman's threat  
Is ripe to execute. Think over this.  
We'll talk again — I really need advice. . . .

---

So Hunter told the coroner. Then resumed  
The matter was a simple thing: I said  
To telegraph the coroner. You are right:  
Those letters give a clue perhaps, your trust  
Is first to see the law enforced. And yet  
I saw he was confused and drinking too,  
For fear his wife would learn of Margery Camp.  
I added, for that matter open the box,  
Take out the letters, find who wrote them, send  
A telegram to the coroner giving the name  
Of the writer of the letters. Well, he nodded,  
Seemed to consent to anything I said.  
And Hunter left me, leaving me in doubt  
What he would do. And what is next? Next day

## HENRY BAKER, AT NEW YORK

He's in the hospital and has pneumonia.  
I take a cab to see him, but I find  
He is too sick to see, is out of mind.  
In three days he is dead. His wife comes in  
And tells me worry killed him — knows the truth  
About this Margery Camp, oh, so she said.  
Had sent a lawyer to her husband asking  
For certain letters of an Elenor Murray.  
And that her husband stood between the fire  
Of some exposure by this Margery Camp,  
Or suffering these letters to be used  
By Margery Camp against the writer for  
A bit of money. This was Mrs. Hunter's  
Interpretation. Well, the fact is clear  
That Hunter feared this Margery Camp — was scared  
About his wife who in some way had learned  
Just at this time of Margery Camp — I think  
Was called up, written to. Between it all  
Poor Hunter's worry, far too fast a life,  
He broke and died. And now you know it all.  
I've learned no client enters at your door  
And nothing casual happens in the day  
That may not change your life, or bring you death.  
And Hunter in a liaison with Margery  
Is brought within the scope of Elenor's  
Life and takes his mortal hurt and dies.

---

So much for raffles in New York. We turn  
Back to LeRoy and see the raffles there,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

See all of them together. Loveridge Chase  
Receives a letter from a New York friend,  
A secret service man who trails and spies  
On Henry Baker, knows about the letters,  
And writes to Loveridge Chase and says to him:  
“ That Elenor Murray dying near LeRoy  
Left letters in New York. I trailed the aunt  
Of Elenor Murray, Margery Camp. Also  
A lawyer, Henry Baker, who controls  
A box with letters left by Elenor Murray —  
So for the story. Why not join with me  
And get these letters? There is money in it,  
Perhaps, who knows? I work for Mrs. Hunter —  
She wants the letters placed where they belong,  
And wants the man who killed this Elenor Murray  
Punished as he should be. Go see the coroner  
And get the work of bringing back the letters.”  
And Chase came to the coroner and spoke:

---

### LOVERIDGE CHASE

Here is the secret of the death of Elenor,  
From what I learn of her, from what I know  
In living, knowing women, I am clear  
About this Elenor Murray. Give me power  
To get the letters, power to give a bond  
To indemnify the company, for you know

## LOVERIDGE CHASE

Letters belong to him who writes the letters;  
And if the company is given bond  
It will surrender them, and then you'll know  
What man she loved, this Gregory Wenner or  
Some other man, and if some other man,  
Whether he caused her death.

The coroner  
And Loveridge Chase sat in the coroner's office  
And talked the matter over. And the coroner,  
Who knew this Loveridge Chase, was wondering  
Why Loveridge Chase had taken up the work  
Of secret service, followed it, and asked,  
"How did you come to give your brains to this,  
Who could do other things?" And Loveridge said:  
"A woman made me, I went round the world  
As jackie once, was brought into this world  
By a mother good and wise, but took from her,  
My father, someone, sense of chivalry  
Too noble for this world, a pity too,  
Abused too much by women. I came back,  
Was hired in a bank; had I gone on  
By this time had been up in banking circles,  
But something happened. You can guess, I think  
It was a woman, was my wife Leone.  
It matters nothing here, except I knew  
This Elenor Murray through my wife. These two  
Were schoolmates, even chums. I'll get these letters  
If you commission me. The fact is this:

## DOMESDAY BOOK

I think this Elenor Murray and Leone  
Were kindred spirits, and it does me good  
Now that I'm living thus without a wife  
To ferret out this matter of Elenor Murray,  
Perhaps this way, or somewhere on the way,  
Find news of my Leone; what life she lives,  
And where she is. I'm curious still, you see."  
Then Coroner Merival, who had not heard  
Of Elenor Murray's letters in New York  
Before this talk of Loveridge Chase, who heard  
This story and analysis of Leone  
Mixed in with other talk, and got a light  
On Elenor Murray, said: "I know your work,  
Know you as well, have confidence in you,  
Make ready to go, and bring the letters back."

And on the day that Loveridge Chase departs  
To get the letters in New York, Bernard,  
A veteran of Belleau, married that day  
To Amy Whidden, on a lofty dune  
At Millers, Indiana, with his bride —  
Long quiet, tells her something of the war.  
These soldiers cannot speak what they have lived.  
But Elenor Murray helps him; for the talk  
Of Elenor Murray runs the rounds, so many  
Stations whence the talk is sent: — the men  
Or women who had known her, came in touch  
Somehow with her. These newly wedded two



## AT NICE

Go out to see blue water, yellow sand,  
And watch the white caps pat the sky, and hear  
The intermittent whispers of the waves.  
And here Bernard, the soldier, tells his bride  
Of Elenor Murray and their days at Nice:

---

## AT NICE

Dear, let me tell you, safe beside you now,  
Your hand in mine, here from this peak of sand,  
Under this pine tree, where the wild grapes spill  
Their fragrance on the lake breeze, from that oak  
Half buried in the sand, devoured by sand —  
The water of the lake is just as blue  
As the sea is there at Nice, the caps as white  
As foam around Mont Boron, Cap Ferrat.  
Here let me tell you things you do not know,  
I could not write, repeat what well you know,  
How love of you sustained me, never changed,  
But through a love was brighter, flame of the torch  
I bore for you in battle, as an incense  
Cast in a flame awakes the deeper essence  
Of fire and makes it mount.

And I am here —  
Here now with you at last — the war is over —  
I have this aching side, these languid mornings,  
And pray for that old strength which never knew

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Fatigue or pain — but I am here with you,  
You are my bride now, I have earned you, dear.  
I fought the fight, endured the endless days  
When rain fell, days of absence, and the days  
Of danger when my only prayer was this:  
Give me, O God, to see you once again.  
This is the deepest rapture, tragedy  
Of this our life, beyond our minds to fathom,  
A thing to stand in awe of, touch in reverence,  
That we — we mortals, find in one another  
Such source of ecstasy, of pain. My love,  
I lay there in the hospital so weak,  
Flopping my hands upon the coverlet,  
And praying God to live. In such an hour  
To be away from you! There are no words  
To speak the weary hours of fear and thought,  
In such an absence, facing death, perhaps,  
A burial in France, with thoughts of you,  
Mourning some years, perhaps, healed partly then  
And wedded to another; then at last  
Myself forgot, or nearly so, and life  
Taking you on with duties, house and children;  
And my poor self forgotten, gone to dust,  
Wasted along the soil of France.

Thank God,  
I'm here with you — it's real, all this is true:  
The roar of the water, sand-hills, infinite sky,  
The gulls, the distant smoke, the smell of grapes,  
The haze of amethyst behind us there,

## AT NICE

In those ravines of stunted oak and pine.  
All this is real. This is America.  
The very air we find from coast to coast,  
The sensible air for lungs seems freer here.  
I had no sooner landed in New York  
Than my arms said stretch out, there's room to stretch.  
I walked along the streets so happy, light  
Of heart and heard the newsboys, shop-girls talk:  
"O, what a cheese he is," or "beat it now"—  
I can't describe the thrill I had to hear  
This loose abandoned slang spilled all around,  
Like coppers soiled from handling, but so real,  
And having power to purchase memories  
Of what I loved and lost awhile, my land!  
Well, then I wanted roast-beef, corn on cob,  
And had them in an hour at early lunch.  
I telegraphed you, gave New York a day,  
And came to you. We are together now,  
We do not dream, do we? We are together  
After the war, to live our lives and grow  
And make of love, experience, life more rich.  
That's what you say to me — it shall be so.

Now I will tell you what I promised to tell  
About my illness and the battle — well,  
I wrote you of my illness, only hinted  
About the care I had, that is the point;  
'Twas care alone that saved me, I was ill  
Beyond all words to tell. And all the while  
I suffered, fearing I would die; but then

## DOMESDAY BOOK

I could not bear to think I should not rise  
To join my fellows, battle once again,  
And charge across the trenches, take no part  
In crushing down the Prussian. For I knew  
He would be crushed at last. I could not bear  
To think I should not take a hand in that,  
Be there when he lay fallen, victory  
From voice to voice should pass along the lines.  
Well, for some weeks I lay there, and at last  
Words dropped around me that the time was near  
For blows to count — would I be there to strike?  
Could I get well in time? And every day  
A sweet voice said: “You’re better, oh it’s great  
How you are growing stronger; yesterday  
Your fever was but one degree, to-day  
It is a little higher. You must rest,  
Not think so much! It may be normal perhaps  
To-morrow or the next day. In a week  
You will be up and gaining, and the battle  
Will not be fought before then, I am sure,  
And not until you’re well and strong again.”  
And thus it went from day to day. Such hands  
Washed my hot face and bathed me, tucked me in,  
And fed me too. And once I said to her:  
“I love a girl, I must get well to fight,  
I must get well to go to her.” And she,  
It was the nurse I spoke to, took my hand,  
And turned away with tears. You see it’s there  
We see the big things, nothing else, the things  
That stand out like the mountains, lesser things

## AT NICE

Are lost like little hillocks under the shadows  
Of great emotions, hopes, realities.  
Well, so it went. And on a day she leaned  
Above my face to smooth the pillow out.  
And from her heart a golden locket fell,  
And dangled by the silver chain. The locket  
Flew open and I saw a face within it,  
That is I saw there was a face, but saw  
No eyes or hair, saw nothing to limn out  
The face so I would know it.

Then I said:  
"You have a lover, nurse." She straightened up  
And questioned me: "Have you been ill before?  
Do you know of the care a nurse can give,  
And what she can withhold?" I answered "Yes."  
And then she asked: "Have you felt in my hands  
Great tenderness, solicitude, even prayer?"—  
Here, sweetheart, do not let your eyes get moist,  
I'll tell you everything, for you must see  
How spirits work together, love to love  
Passes and does its work.

Well, it was true,  
I felt her tenderness, which was like prayer,  
And so I answered her: "If I get well,  
You will have cured me with your human love."  
And then she said: "Our unit reached this place  
When there was neither stoves nor lights. At night  
We went to bed by candles. Stumbled around

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Amid the trunks and beds by candle light.  
Well, one of us would light a candle, then  
Each, one by one, the others lighted theirs  
From this one down the room. And so we passed  
The light along. And as a candle died,  
The others burned, to which the light was passed.  
Well, now," she said, " that is a figure of love:  
We get the flame from someone, light another,  
Make brighter light by holding flame to flame —  
Sometimes we searched for something, held two candles  
Together for a greater light. And so,  
My soldier, I have given you the care  
That comes from love — of country and the cause,  
But brightened, warmed by one from whom the flame  
Was passed to me, a love that took my hand  
And warmed it, made it tender for that love,  
Which said pour out and serve, take love for him  
And use it in the cause, by using hands  
To bathe, to soothe, to smooth a pillow down,  
To heal, sustain."

The truth is, dearest heart,  
I had not lived, I think, except for her.  
And there we were: I filled with love for you,  
And therefore praying to get well and fight,  
Be worthy of your love, and there she was  
With love for someone, striving with that love  
To nurse me through and give me well and strong  
To battle in the cause.

## AT NICE

Then I got well  
And joined my company. She took my hand  
As I departed, closed her eyes and said:  
“ May God be with you.”

Well, it was Belleau,  
That jungle of machine guns, like a thicket  
Of rattle snakes. And there was just one thing  
To clean that thicket out — we had to charge,  
And so we yelled and charged. No soldier knows  
How one survives in such a charge as that.  
You simply yell and charge; the bullets fall  
Like drops of rain around you pitter-pat;  
And on you go and think: where will it get me,  
The stomach or the heart or through the head?  
What will it be like, sudden blackness, pain,  
No pain at all? And so you charge the nests.  
The fellows fell around us like tenpins,  
Dropped guns, or flung them up, fell on their faces,  
Or toppled backward, pitched ahead and flung  
Their helmets off in pitching. And at last  
I found myself half-dazed, as in a dream,  
Right in a nest, two Boches facing me,  
And then I saw this locket, as I saw it  
Fall from her breast, it might have been a glint  
Of metal, flash of firing, I don't know.  
I only know I ran my bayonet  
Through one of them; he fell, I stuck the other,  
Then something stung my side. When I awoke  
I lay upon a cot, and heard the nurses

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Discuss the peace, the armistice was signed,  
The war was over. Well, and in a way  
We won the war, I won the war, as one  
Who did his part, at least.

Then I got up,  
But I was weak and dazed. They said to me  
I should not cross the ocean in the winter,  
My lungs might get infected; anyway,  
The flu was raging. So they sent me down  
To Nice upon a furlough, as I wrote.  
I could not write you all I saw and heard,  
It was all lovely and all memorable.

But first before I picture Nice to you,  
My days at Nice, lest you have doubts and fears  
When I reveal to you I saw this nurse  
First on the Promenade des Anglais there,  
Saw much of her in Nice, I saw at once  
She was that Elenor Murray whom they found  
Along the river dead; and for the rest  
To make all clear, I'll tell you everything.  
You see I didn't write you of this girl  
And what we did there, lest you might suspect  
Some vagrant mood in me concealed or glossed,  
Which ended in betrayal of our love.  
Eyes should look into eyes to supplement  
The words of truth with light of truth, where nothing  
Of thoughts that hide have chance to slip and crawl  
Through eyes averted, twinklings, change of light,



## AT NICE

Or if they do, reveal themselves, as snakes  
Are seen when winding into coverts of grass.

Well, then we met upon the promenade.  
She ran toward me, kissed me — oh so glad.  
I told her of the battle, of my wound.  
And for herself it seemed she had been ill,  
Off duty for a month before she came  
To Nice for health; she said as much to me.  
I think she had been ill, yet I could sense,  
Or seemed to sense a mystery, I don't know,  
Behind her illness. Yet you understand  
How it was natural we should be happy  
To meet again, in Nice, too. For you see  
The army life develops comradeship.  
And when we meet the old life rises up  
And wakes its thrills and memories. It seemed  
She had been there some days when I arrived  
And knew the place, and said, "I'll show you Nice."  
There was a major she was waiting for,  
As it turned out. He came there in a week,  
We had some walks together, all the three,  
And then I lost them.

But before he came  
We did the bright cafés and Monte Carlo,  
And here my little nurse showed something else  
Besides the tender hands, the prayerful soul.  
She had been taking egg-nogs, so she said,  
But now she took to wine, and drink she could

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Beyond all men I know. I had to stop  
Or fall beneath the table, leaving her  
To order more. And she would sit and weave  
From right to left hip in a rhythmic way,  
And cast her eyes obliquely right and left.  
It was this way: The music set her thrilling,  
And keeping time this way. She loved to go  
Where we could see cocotes, adventurers;  
Where red vitality was feasting, drinking,  
And dropping gold upon the gaming table.  
We sunned ourselves within the Jardin Public,  
And walked the beach between the bathing places  
Where they dry orange peel to make perfumes.  
And in that golden sunshine by the sea  
Caught whiffs of lemon blossoms, and each day  
I bought her at the stands acacia,  
Or red anemones — I tell you all —  
There was no moment that my thought betrayed  
Your heart, dear one. She had been good to me.  
I saw that she was hungry for these things,  
For rapture, so I gave them — you don't mind,  
It came to nothing, dearest.

But at last  
A different Elenor Murray than I knew  
There in the hospital took shape before me.  
That serving soul, that maid of humble tasks,  
And sacrifice for others, and that face  
Of waitress or of ingenue, day by day  
Assumed sophistication, looks and lines

## AT NICE

Of knowledge in the world, experience  
In places of patrician ways. She knew  
New York as well as I, cafés and shops;  
Dropped pregnant hints at times that made me think  
What more she knew, what she was holding back.  
Until at last all she had done for me  
Seemed just what mortals do to earn their bread  
In any calling, made more generous, maybe,  
By something in a moment's mood. In truth  
The ideal showed the clogged pores in the skin  
Under the light she stood in. For you know  
When we see people happy we can say  
Those tears were not all tears — we pitied more  
Than we were wise to pity — that's the feeling:  
Most men are Puritans in this, I think.  
A woman dancing, drinking, makes you laugh,  
And half despise yourself for great emotion  
When seeing her in prayer or reverent thought.  
But now I come to something more concrete:  
The day before the major came we lunched  
Where we could see the Mediterranean,  
The clubs, hotels and villas. There she sat  
All dressed in white, a knitted jacket of silk  
Matching the leaves upon the trees, and looked  
As fashionable as the rest. The waiter came.  
She did not take the card nor order from it,  
Was nonchalant, familiar, said at last:  
“We want some Epernay. You have it doubtless.”  
The waiter bowed. I looked at Elenor,  
That was the character of revealing things

## DOMESDAY BOOK

I saw from day to day. For truth to tell  
This Epernay might well have been charged water  
For all I knew. I asked her, and she said:  
"Delicious wine, not strong." And so we lunched,  
And the music stormed, and lunchers gabbled, smoked,  
And dandies ogled. And this Epernay  
Worked in our blood and Elenor rattled on.  
And she was flinging eyes from right to left  
And moving rhythmically from hip to hip,  
And with a finger beating out the time.  
Somehow our hands touched, then she closed her eyes,  
Her body shook a little and grew limp.  
"What is the matter?" Then she raised her eyes  
And looked me through an instant. What, my dear,  
You won't hear any more? Oh, very well,  
That's all, there is no more.

But after while  
When things got quieter, the lunchers thinned,  
The music ended, and the wine grown tame  
Within our veins, she told me on a time  
Some years before she was confirmed, and thought  
She'd take the veil, and for two years or more  
Was all absorbed in pious thoughts and works.  
"But how we learn and change," she added then,  
"In training we see bodies, learn to know  
How thirst and hunger, needs of body cry  
For daily care, become materialists,  
Unmoralists a little in the sense  
That any book, or theories of the soul

## AT NICE

Should tie the body from its natural needs.  
Though I accept the faith, no less than ever,  
That God is and the Savior is and spirit  
Is no less real than body, has its needs,  
Separate or through the body."

Oh, that girl!

She made me guess and wonder. But next day  
I had a fresh surprise, the major came  
And she was changed completely. I forgot,  
I must tell you what happened after lunch.  
We rose and she grew impish, stood and laughed  
As if the secret of the laugh was hers  
Beyond the concrete matter of the laugh.  
She said, "I'll show you something beautiful."  
We started out to see it, walked the road  
Around the foot of Castle Hill. You know  
The wind blows gustily at Nice; and so  
All of a sudden went my hat, way up,  
Far off, and instantly such laughter rose,  
And boisterous shouts that made me think at once  
I had been tricked, somehow. It is this way:  
The gamins loiter there to watch the victims  
Who lose their hats. And Elenor sat down,  
And laughed until she cried. I do not know,  
Perhaps I was not amorous enough  
At luncheon and she pranked me for revenge.  
Well, then the major came, he took my place.  
I was the third one in the party now,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

But saw them every day. What did we do?  
No Monte Carlo now, nor ordering  
Without the card, she was completely changed,  
Demure again, all words of lovely things:  
The war had changed the world, had lifted up  
The spirit of man to visions, and the major  
Adored her, drank it in. And we explored  
Limpia and the Old Town, looked aloft  
At Mont Cau d'Aspremont, picked hellebore,  
And orchids in the gorges, saw St. Pons,  
The Valley of Hepaticas, sunned ourselves  
Within the Jardin Public, where the children  
Play riotously; and Elenor would draw  
A straying child to her and say: "You darling."  
I saw her do this once and dry her eyes  
And to the major say: "They are so lovely,  
I had to give up teaching school, the children  
Stirred my emotions till I could not bear  
To be among them." And to make an end,  
I spent the parts of three days with these two.  
And on the last day we went to the summit  
Of the Corinche Road, and saw the sea and Europe  
Spread out before us — oh, you cannot know  
The beauty of it, dear, until you see it.  
And Elenor sat down as in a trance,  
And looked and did not speak for minutes. Then  
She said: "How pure a place this is — it's nature,  
And I can worship here, this makes you hate  
The cafés and the pleasures of the town."  
What was this woman, dear, what was her soul?

## AT NICE,

Or was she half and half? Oh, after all,  
I am a hostile mixture, so are you.

And so I drifted out, and only stayed  
A day or two beyond that afternoon.  
I took a last walk on the Promenade;  
At last saw just ahead of me these two,  
His arm was fast in hers, they sauntered on  
As if in serious talk. As I came up,  
I greeted them and said good-bye again.

Where is the major? Did the major steal  
The heart of Elenor Murray, speed her death?  
They could have married. Why did she return?  
Or did the major follow her? Well, dear,  
Here is the story, truthful to a fault.  
My soul is yours, I kept it true to you.  
Hear how the waters roar upon the sand!  
I close my eyes and almost can believe  
We are together on the Corniche Road.

---

Well, it may never be that Merival  
Heard from Bernard of Elenor at Nice,  
Although he knew it sometime, knew as well  
Her service in the war had nerved the men  
And by that much had put the Germans down.  
America at the fateful moment lent  
Her strength to bring the war's end. Elenor  
Was one of many to cross seas and bring  
Life strength against the emperor, once secure,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And throned in power against such phagocytes  
As Elenor Murray, Bernard, even kings.  
And sawing wood at Amerongen all  
He thought of was of brains and monstrous hearts  
Which sent the phagocytes from America,  
England and France to eat him up at last.

One day an American soldier, so 'tis said  
Someone told Merival, was walking near  
The house at Amerongen, saw a man  
With drooped mustache and whitened beard approach,  
Two mastiffs walked beside him. As he passed  
Unrecognized, the soldier to a mate  
Spoke up and said: "What hellish dogs are those? —  
Like Bismarck used to have; I saw a picture  
Of Bismarck with his dogs." The drooped mustache  
Turned nervously and took the soldiers in,  
Then strode ahead. The emperor was stunned  
To hear an American soldier use a knife  
As sharp as that.

But Elenor at Nice  
Walked with the major as Bernard has told.  
And this is wrinkled water, dark and far  
From Merival, unknown to him. He hears,  
And this alone, she went from Nice to Florence,  
Was ill there in a convent, we shall see.  
This is the tale that Irma Leese related  
To Coroner Merival in a leisure hour:





## DOMESDAY BOOK

The major helped

To free the rules for Elenor Murray so  
She might recuperate at Nice, and said:  
"Go and await me, I shall join you there.  
For in my trouble I must have a friend,  
A woman to assuage me, give me light,  
And ever since I saw you by that grave,  
And saw you cross yourself, and bow your head  
And watched your services along the wards  
Among the sick and dying, I have felt  
The soul of you, its human tenderness,  
Its prodigal power of giving, pouring forth  
Itself for others. And you seem a soul  
Where nothing of our human frailty  
Has come to dim the flame that burns in you,  
You are all light, I think."

And Elenor Murray

Looked down and said: "There is no soul like that.  
This hospital, the war itself, reflects  
The good and bad together of our souls.  
You are a boy — oh such a boy to see  
All good in me."

And Major Petain said:

"At least you have not found dishonor here  
As I have found it, for a lust of flesh  
A weakness and a trespass."

## THE MAJOR AND ELENOR MURRAY

This was after  
The hospital was noisy with the talk  
Of Major Petain and his shame, the hand  
Of discipline lay on him.

Elenor Murray  
Looked steadily in his eyes, but only said:  
"We mortals know each other but a little,  
Nor guess each other's secrets." And she glanced  
A moment at the tragedy that had come  
To her at Paris on her furlough there,  
And of its train of sorrows, even now  
Her broken health and failure in the work  
As consequence to that, and how it brought  
The breaking of her passionate will and dream  
To serve and not to fail — she glanced at this  
A moment as she faced him, looked at him.  
Then as she turned away: "There is one thing  
That I must tell you, it is fitting now,  
I love and am beloved. But if you come  
To Nice and I can help you, come, if talk  
And any poor advice of mine can help."

So Major Petain, Elenor Murray walked  
The Promenade at Nice, arm fast in arm.  
And Major Petain to relieve his heart  
Told all the tragedy that had come to him:

"Duty to France was first with me where love  
Was paramount with you, if I divine

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Your heart, America's, at least a love  
Unmixed of other feelings as may be.  
What could you find here, if you seek no husband,  
Even in seeing France so partially?  
What in adventure, lures to bring you here,  
Where peril, labor are? You either came  
To expiate your soul, or as you say,  
To make more worthy of this man beloved  
Back in America your love for him.  
Dear idealist, I give my faith to you,  
And all your words. But as I said 'twas duty,  
Then dreams of freedom, Europe's chains struck off,  
The menace of the German crushed to earth  
That fired me as a soldier, trained to go  
When France should need me. So it is you saw  
France go about this business calm and stern,  
And patient for the prize, or if 'twere lost  
Then brave to meet the future as France met  
The arduous years that followed Metz, Sedan."

" But had I been American to the core,  
Would I have put the sweet temptation by?  
However flamed with zeal had I said no  
When lips like hers were offered? Oh, you see  
Whatever sun-light gilds the mountain tops  
Rich grass grows in the valleys, herds will feed,  
Though rising suns put glories on the heights.  
And herds will run and stumble over rocks,  
Break fences and encounter beasts of prey  
To get the grass that's sweetest."

## THE MAJOR AND ELENOR MURRAY

“ To begin

I met her there in Paris. In a trice  
We loved each other, wrote, made vows, she pledged  
The consummation. There was danger here,  
Great danger, as you know, for her and me.  
And yet it never stopped us, gave us fear.  
And then I schemed and got her through the lines,  
Took all the chances.”

“ Danger was not all:

There was my knowledge of her husband's love,  
His life immaculate, his daily letters.  
He put by woman chances that arose  
With saying, I am married, am beloved,  
I love my wife, all said so earnestly  
We could not joke him, though behind his back  
Some said: He trusts her, but he'd better watch;  
At least no sense of passing good things by.  
I sat with him at mess, I saw him read  
The letters that she wrote him, face of light  
Devouring eyes. The others rallied him;  
But I was like a man who knows a plot  
To take another's life, but keeps the secret,  
Eats with the victim, does not warn him, makes  
Himself thereby a party to the plot.  
Or like a man who knows a fellow man  
Has some insidious disease beginning,  
And hears him speak with unconcern of it,  
And does not tell him what to do, you know,  
And let him go to death. And just for her,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The rapture of a secret love I choked  
All risings of an honest manhood, mercy,  
Honor with self and him. Oh, well you know  
The isolation, hunger of us soldiers,  
I only need to hint of these. But now  
I see these well endured for sake of peace  
And quiet memory."

"For here we stood  
Just 'round the corner in that long arcade  
That runs between our building, next to yours.  
And this is what I hear — the husband's voice,  
Which well I knew, the officer's in command:  
'Why have you brought your wife here?' asked the officer.  
'Pardon, I have not done so,' said the husband.  
'You're adding falsehood to the offense; you know  
The rules forbid your wife to pass the lines.'  
'Pardon, I have not brought her,' he exclaimed  
In passionate earnestness.

"Well, there we stood.  
My sweetheart, but his wife, was turned to snow,  
As white and cold. I got in readiness  
To kill the husband. How could we escape?  
I thought the husband had been sent away;  
Her coming had been timed with his departure,  
Arriving afterward, and we had failed.  
But as for that, before our feet could stir,  
The officer said, 'Come now, I'll prove your lie,'  
And in a twinkling, taking a dozen steps

## THE MAJOR AND ELENOR MURRAY

They turned into the arcade, there they were,  
The officer was shaking him and saying,  
' You lie! You lie! '

“ All happened in a moment,  
The humbled, ruined fellow saw the truth,  
And blew his brains out on the very spot!  
And made a wonder, gossip for you girls —  
And here I am.”

So Major Petain finished.  
Then Elenor Murray said: “ Let's watch the sea.”  
And as they sat in silence, as he turned  
To look upon her face, he saw the tears,  
Hanging like dew drops on her lashes, drip  
And course her cheeks. “ My friend, you weep for me,”  
The major said at last, “ my gratitude  
For tears like these.” “ I weep,” said Elenor Murray,  
“ For you, but for myself. What can I say?  
Nothing, my friend, your soul must find its way.  
Only this word: I'll go to mass with you,  
I'll sit beside you, pray with you, for you,  
And do you pray for me.”

And then she paused.  
The long wash of the sea filled in the silence.  
And then she said again, “ I'll go with you,  
Where we may pray, each for the other pray.  
I have a sorrow, too, as deep as yours.”





## THE CONVENT

Sobs gathering in her throat, her body weak,  
And reeled against the wall, for so it seemed,  
Against which hung thick curtains, velvet, red,  
A little grimed and worn. And as she leaned  
Against the curtains, clung to them, she felt  
A giving, parted them, and found a door,  
Pushed on the door which yielded, opened it  
And saw a yard before her.

It was walled.

A garden of old urns and ancient growths,  
Some flowering plants around the wall.

Before her

And in the garden's center stood a statue,  
With outstretched arms, the Virgin without the child.  
And suddenly on Elenor Murray came  
Great sorrow like a madness, seeing there  
The pitying Virgin, stretching arms to her.  
And so she ran along the pebbly walk,  
Fell fainting at the Virgin's feet and lay  
Unconscious in the garden.

When she woke

Two nuns were standing by, and one was dressed  
In purest white, and held within her hands  
A tray of gold, and on the tray of gold  
There was a glass of wine, and in a cup  
Some broth of beef, and on a plate of gold  
A wafer.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And the other nun was dressed  
In purest white, but over her shoulders lay  
A cape of blue, blue as the sky of Florence  
Above the garden wall.

Then as she saw  
The nuns before her, in the interval  
Of gathering thought, re-limning life again  
From wonder if she had not died, and these  
Were guides or ministrants of another world,  
The nun with cape of blue to Elenor  
Said: " Drink this wine, this broth;" and Elenor  
Drank and arose, being lifted up by them,  
And taken through the convent door and given  
A little room as white and clean as light,  
And a bed of snowy linen.

Then they said:  
" This is the Convent where we send up prayers,  
Prayers for the souls who do not pray for self —  
Rest, child, and be at peace; and if there be  
Friends you would tell that you are here, then we  
Will send the word for you, sleep now and rest."  
And listening to their voices Elenor slept.  
And when she woke a nurse was at her side,  
And food was served her, broths and fruit. Each day  
A doctor came to tell her all was well,  
And health would soon return.

So for a month  
Elenor Murray lay and heard the bells,

## THE CONVENT

And breathed the fragrance of the flowering city  
That floated through her window, in the stillness  
Of the convent dreamed, and said to self: This place  
Is good to die in, who is there to tell  
That I am here? There was no one. To them  
She gave her name, but said: "Till I am well  
Let me remain, and if I die, some place  
Must be for me for burial, put me there.  
And if I live to go again to France  
And join my unit, let me have a writing  
That I did not desert, was stricken here  
And could not leave. For while I stole away  
From Nice to get a glimpse of Italy,  
I might have done so in my furlough time,  
And not stayed over it." And to Elenor  
The nuns said: "We will help you, but for now  
Rest and put by anxieties."

On a day

Elenor Murray made confessional.  
And to the nuns told bit by bit her life,  
Her childhood, schooling, travels, work in the war,  
What fate had followed her, what sufferings.  
And Sister Mary, she who saw her first,  
And held the tray of gold with wine and broth,  
Sat often with her, read to her, and said:  
"Letters will go ahead of you to clear  
Your absence over time — be not afraid,  
All will be well."

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And so when Elenor Murray  
Arose to leave she found all things prepared:  
A cab to take her to the train, compartments  
Reserved for her from place to place, her fare  
And tickets paid for, till at last she came  
To Brest and joined her unit, in three days  
Looked at the rolling waters as the ship  
Drove to America — such a coming home!  
To what and whom?

---

Loveridge Chase returned and brought the letters  
To Coroner Merival from New York. That day  
The chemical analysis was finished, showed  
No ricin and no poison. Elenor Murray  
Died how? What were the circumstances? Then  
When Coroner Merival broke the seals of wax,  
And cut the twine that bound the package, found  
The man was Barrett Bays who wrote the letters —  
There were a hundred — then he cast about  
To lay his hands on Barrett Bays, and found  
That Barrett Bays lived in Chicago, taught,  
Was a professor, aged some forty years.  
Why did this Barrett Bays emerge not, speak,  
Come forward? Was it simply to conceal  
A passion written in these letters here  
For his sake or his wife's? Or was it guilt  
For some complicity in Elenor's death?  
And on this day the coroner had a letter  
From Margery Camp which said: "Where's Barrett  
Bays?"

## THE CONVENT

Why have you not arrested him? He knows  
Something, perhaps about the death of Elenor.”  
So Coroner Merival sent process forth  
To bring in Barrett Bays, *non est inventus*.  
He had not visited his place of teaching,  
Been seen in haunts accustomed for some days —  
Not since the death of Elenor Murray, none  
Knew where to find him, and none seemed to know  
What lay between this man and Elenor Murray.  
This was the more suspicious. Then the *Times*  
Made headlines of the letters, published some  
Wherein this Barrett Bays had written Elenor:  
“You are my hope in life, my morning star,  
My love at last, my all.” From coast to coast  
The word was flashed about this Barrett Bays;  
And Mrs. Bays at Martha’s Vineyard read,  
Turned up her nose, continued on the round  
Of gaieties, but to a chum relieved  
Her loathing with these words: “Another woman,  
He’s soiled himself at last.”

And Barrett Bays,  
Who roughed it in the Adirondacks, hoped  
The inquest’s end would leave him undisclosed  
In Elenor Murray’s life, though wracked with fear  
About the letters in the vault, some day  
To be unearthed, or taken, it might be,  
By Margery Camp for uses sinister —  
He reading that the letters had been given  
To Coroner Merival, and seeing his name

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Printed in every sheet, saw no escape  
In any nook of earth, returned and walked  
In Merival's office: trembling, white as snow.

So Barrett Bays was sworn, before the jury  
Sat and replied to questions, said he knew  
Elenor Murray in the fall before  
She went to France, saw much of her for weeks;  
Had written her these letters before she left.  
Had followed her in the war, and gone to France,  
Had seen her for some days in Paris when  
She had a furlough. Had come back and parted  
With Elenor Murray, broken with her, found  
A cause for crushing out his love for her.  
Came back to win forgetfulness, had written  
No word to her since leaving Paris — let  
Her letters lie unanswered; brought her letters,  
And gave them to the coroner. Then he told  
Of the day before her death, and how she came  
By motor to Chicago with her aunt,  
Named Irma Leese, and telephoned him, begged  
An hour for talk. "Come meet me by the river,"  
She had said. And so went to meet her. Then he told  
Why he relented, after he had left her  
In Paris with no word beside this one:  
"This is the end." Now he was curious  
To know what she would say, what could be said  
Beyond what she had written — so he went  
Out of a curious but hardened heart.

## BARRETT BAYS

### BARRETT BAYS

“ I was walking by the river,” Barrett said,  
“ When she arrived. I took her hand, no kiss,  
A silence for some minutes as we walked.  
Then we began to take up point by point,  
For she was concentrated on the hope  
Of clearing up all doubtful things that we  
Might start anew, clear visioned, perfect friends,  
More perfect for mistakes and clouds. Her will  
Was passionate beyond all other wills,  
And when she set her mind upon a course  
She could not be diverted, or if so,  
Her failure kept her brooding. What with me  
She wanted after what had stunned my faith  
I knew not, save she loved me. For in truth  
I have no money, and no prospects either  
To tempt cupidity.”

“ Well, first we talked —  
You must be patient with me, gentlemen,  
You see my nerves — they’re weakened — but I’ll try  
To tell you all — well then — a glass of water —  
At first we talked but trifles. Silences  
Came on us like great calms between the stir  
Of ineffectual breezes, like this day  
In August growing sultry as the sun  
Rose upward. She was striving to break down  
The hard corrosion of my thought, and I

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Could not surrender. Till at last, I said:  
'That day in Paris when you stood revealed  
Can never be forgotten. Once I killed  
A love with hatred for a woman who  
Betrayed me, as you did. And you can kill  
A love with hatred but you kill your soul  
While killing love. And so with you I kept  
All hatred from my heart, but cannot keep  
A poisonous doubt of you from blood and brain.' . . .  
I learned in Paris, (to be clear on this),  
That after she had given herself to me  
She fell back in the arms of Gregory Wenner.  
And here as we were walking I revealed  
My agony, my anger, emptied out  
My heart of all its bitterness. At last  
When she protested it was natural  
For her to do what she had done, the act  
As natural as breathing, taking food,  
Not signifying faithlessness nor love —  
Though she admitted had she loved me then  
She had not done so — I grew tense with rage,  
A serpent which grows stiff and rears its head  
To strike its enemy was what I seemed  
To myself then, and so I said to her  
In voice controlled and low, but deadly clear,  
'What are you but a whore — you are a whore!'  
Murderous words no doubt, but do you hear  
She justified herself with Gregory Wenner;  
Yes, justified herself when she had written  
And asked forgiveness — yes, brought me out



## BARRETT BAYS

To meet her by the river. And for what?  
I said you whore, she shook from head to heels,  
And toppled, but I caught her in my arms,  
And held her up, she paled, head rolled around,  
Her eyes set, mouth fell open, all at once  
I saw that she was dead, or syncope  
Profound had come upon her. Elenor,  
What is the matter? Love came back to me,  
Love there with Death. I laid her on the ground.  
I found her dead.

“ If I had any thought  
There in that awful moment, it was this:  
To run away, escape, could I maintain  
An innocent presence there, be clear of fault?  
And if I had that thought, as I believe,  
I had no other; all my mind's a blank  
Until I find myself at one o'clock  
Disrobing in my room, too full of drink,  
And trying to remember.

“ With the morning  
I lay in bed and thought: Did Irma Leese  
Know anything of me, or did she know  
That Elenor went out to meet a man?  
And if she did not know, who could disclose  
That I was with her? No one saw us there.  
Could I not wait from day to day and see  
What turn the news would take? For at the last  
I did not kill her. If the inquest showed

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Her death was natural, as it was, for all  
Of me, why then my secret might be hidden  
In Elenor Murray's grave. And if they found  
That I was with her, brought me in the court,  
I could make clear my innocence. And thus  
I watched the papers, gambled with the chance  
Of never being known in this affair.  
Does this sound like a coward? Put yourself  
In my place in that horror. Think of me  
With all these psychic shell shocks — first the war,  
Its great emotions, then this Elenor."

And thus he spoke and twisted hands, and twitched,  
And ended suddenly. Then David Borrow,  
And Winthrop Marion with the coroner  
Shot questions at him till he woke, regained  
A memory, concentration: Who are you?  
What was your youth? Your love life? What your  
wife?

Where did you meet this Elenor at the first?  
Why did you go to France? In Paris what  
Happened to break your balance? Tell us all.  
For as they eyed him, he looked down, away,  
Stirred restless in the chair. And was it truth  
He told of meeting Elenor, her death?  
Guilt like a guise was on his face. And one —  
This Isaac Newfeldt, juryman, whispered, "Look,  
That man is guilty, let us fly the questions  
Like arrows at him till we bring him down."

## BARRETT BAYS

And as they flew the arrows he came to  
And spoke as follows:—

“ First, I am a heart  
That from my youth has sought for love and hungered.  
And Elenor Murray’s heart had hungered too,  
Which drew our hearts together, made our love  
As it were mystical, more real. I was  
A boy who sought for beauty, hope and faith  
In woman’s love; at fourteen met a girl  
Who carried me to ecstasy till I walked  
In dreamland, stepping clouds. She loved me too.  
I could not cure my heart, have always felt  
A dull pain for that girl. She died, you know.  
I found another, rather made myself  
Discover my ideal in her, until  
My heart was sure she was the one. And then  
I woke up from this trance, went to another  
Still searching; always searching, reaching now  
An early cynicism, how to play with hearts,  
Extract their beauty, pass to someone else.  
I was a little tired now, seemed to know  
There is no wonder woman, just a woman  
Somewhere to be a wife. And then I met  
The woman whom I married, thought to solve  
My problem with the average things of life;  
The satisfaction of insistent sex,  
A home, a regular program, turn to work,  
Forget the dream, the quest. What did I find?  
A woman who exhausted me and bored me,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Stirred never a thought, a fancy, brought no friends,  
No pleasures or diversions, took from me  
All that I had to give of mind and heart,  
Purse, or what not. And she was barren too,  
And restless; by that restlessness relieved  
The boredom of our life; it took her off  
In travels here and there. And I was glad  
To have her absent, but it still is true  
There is a hell in marriage, when it keeps  
Delights of freedom off, all other women  
Not willing to intrigue, pass distantly  
Your married man; but on the other hand  
What was my marriage with a wife away  
Six months or more of every year? And when  
I said to her, divorce me, she would say,  
You want your freedom to get married — well,  
The other woman shall not have you, if  
There is another woman, as I think.  
And so the years went by. I'm thirty-five  
And meet a woman, play light heartedly,  
She is past thirty, understands nor asks  
A serious love. It's summer and we jaunt  
About the country, for my wife's away.  
As usual, in the fall returns, and then  
My woman says, the holiday is over,  
Go back to work, and I'll go back to work.  
I cannot give her up, would still go on  
For this delight so sweet to me. By will  
I hold her, stir the fire up to inflame  
Her hands for me, make love to her in short

## BARRETT BAYS

And find myself in love, beholding in her  
All beauties and all virtues. Well, at first  
What did I care what she had been before,  
Whose mistress, sweetheart? Now I cared and asked  
Fidelity from her, and this she pledged.  
And so a settled life seemed come to us,  
We had found happiness. But on a day  
I caught her in unfaithfulness. A man  
She knew before she knew me crossed her path.  
Why do they do this, even while their lips  
Are wet with kisses given you? I think  
A woman may be true in marriage, never  
In any free relationship. And then  
I left her, killed the love I had with hate.  
Hate is an energy with which to save  
A heart knocked over by a blow like this.  
To forgive this wrong is never to forget,  
But always to remember, with increasing  
Sorrow and dreams invest the ruined love.  
And so I turned to hate, came from the flames  
As hard and glittering as crockery ware,  
And went my way with gallant gestures, winning  
An hour of rapture where it came to me.  
And all the time my wife was much away,  
Yet left me in this state where I was kept  
From serious love if I had found the woman.  
A pterodactyl in my life and soul:  
Had wings, could fly, but slumbered in the mud.  
Was neither bird nor beast; as social being  
Was neither bachelor nor married man.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The years went on with work, day after day  
Arising to the task, night after night  
Returning for the rest with which to rise,  
Forever following the mad illusion,  
The dream, the expected friend, the great event  
Which should change life, and never finding it.  
And all the while I see myself consumed,  
Sapped somehow by this wife and hating her;  
Then fearful for myself for hating her,  
Then melting into generousities  
For hating her. And so tossed back and forth  
Between such passions, also never at peace  
From the dream of love, the woman and the mate  
I stagger, amble, hurtle through the years,  
And reach that summer of two years ago  
When life began to change. It was this way:  
My wife is home, for a wonder, and my friend,  
Most sympathetic, nearest, comes to dine.  
He casts his comprehending eyes about,  
Takes all things in. As we go down to town,  
And afterward at luncheon, when alone  
He says to me: she is a worthy woman,  
Beautiful, too, there is no other woman  
To make you happier, the fault is yours,  
At least in part, remove your part of the fault,  
To woo her, give yourself, find good in her.  
Go take a trip. For neither man nor woman  
Yields everything till wooed, tried out, beloved.  
Bring all your energies to the trial of her.  
She will respond, unfold, repay your work.

## BARRETT BAYS

He won me with his words. I said to her,  
Let's summer at Lake Placid — so we went.  
I tried his plan, did all I could, no use.  
The woman is not mine, was never mine,  
Was meant for someone else. And in despair,  
In wrath as well, I left her and came back  
And telephoned a woman that I knew  
To dine with me. She came, was glad and gay,  
But as she drew her gloves off let me see  
A solitaire. What, you? I said to her,  
You leave me too? She smiled and answered me;  
Marriage may be the horror that you think,  
And yet we all must try it once, and Charles  
Is nearest my ideal of any man.  
I have been very ill since last we met,  
Had not survived except for skillful hands,  
And Charles was good to me, with heart and purse.  
My illness took my savings. I repay  
His goodness with my hand. I love him too.  
You do not care to lose me. As for that  
I know one who will more than take my place;  
She is the nurse who nursed me back to health,  
I'll have you meet her, I can get her now.  
She rose and telephoned. In half an hour  
Elenor Murray joined us, dined with us.  
I watched her as she entered, did not see  
A single wonder in her, cannot now  
Remember how she looked, what dress she wore,  
What hat in point of color, anything.  
After the dinner I rode home with them,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Saw Elenor at luncheon next day. So  
The intimacy began."

" She was alone,  
Unsettled and unhappy, pressed for funds.  
She had, it seemed, nursed Janet without pay  
Till Charles made good at last the weekly wage;  
Since Janet's illness had no work to do.  
I was alone and bored, she came to me  
Almost at first as woman never came  
To me before, so radiant, sympathetic,  
Admiring, so devoted with a heart  
That soothed and strove to help me. Strange to say  
These manifests of spirit, ministrations  
Bespoke the woman who has found a man,  
And never knew a man before. She seemed  
An old maid jubilant for a man at last,  
And truth to tell I took her rapturous ways  
With just a little reticence, and shrinking  
Of spirit lest her hands would touch too close  
My spirit which misvalued hers, withdraw  
Itself from hers with hidden smiles that she  
Could find so much in me. She did not change,  
Retreat, draw in; advanced, poured out, gave more  
And wooed me, till I feared if I should take  
Her body she would follow me, grow mad  
And shameless for her love."

" But as for that  
That next day while at luncheon, frank and bold,



## BARRETT BAYS

I spoke right out to her and then she shook  
From head to foot, and made her knife in hand  
Rattle the plate for trembling, turned as pale  
As the table linen. Afterward as we met,  
Having begun so, I renewed the word,  
Half smiling to behold her so perturbed,  
And serious, and gradually toning down  
Pursuit of her this way, as I perceived  
Her interest growing and her clinging ways,  
Her ardor, huddling to me, great devotion;  
Rapt words of friendship, offers of herself  
For me or mine for nothing were we ill  
And needed her."

" These currents flowed along.  
Hers plunged and sparkled, mine was slow for thought.  
A doubt of her, or fear, till on a night  
When nothing had been said of this before,  
Quite suddenly when nearing home she shrank,  
Involved herself in shrinking in the corner  
Of the cab's seat, and spoke up: ' Take me now,  
I'm yours to-night, will do what you desire,  
Whatever you desire.' I acted then,  
Seemed overjoyed, was puzzled just the same,  
And almost feared her. As I said before,  
I feared she might pursue me, trouble me  
After a hold like this,— and yet I said:  
' Go get your satchel, meet me in an hour.'  
I let her out, drove to the club, and thought;  
Then telephoned her, business had come up,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

I could not meet her, but would telephone  
To-morrow."

" And to-morrow when it came  
Brought ridicule and taunting from myself:  
To have pursued this woman, for two months,  
And if half-heartedly, you've made her think  
Your heart was wholly in it, now she yields,  
Bestows herself. You fly, you are a fool;  
A village pastor playing Don Juan,  
A booby costumed as a gallant -- pooh!  
Go take your chance. I telephoned her then,  
That night she met me."

" Here was my surprise:  
All semblance of the old maid fell away,  
Like robes as she disrobed. She brought with her  
Accoutrements of slippers, caps of lace,  
And oriental perfumes languorous.  
The hour had been all heaven had I sensed,  
Sensed without thinking consciously a play,  
Dramatics, acting, like an old maid who  
Resorts to tricks of dress she fancies wins  
A gallant of experience, fancies only  
And knows not, being fancied so appears  
Half ludicrous."

" But so our woe began.  
That morning we had breakfast in our room,  
And I was thinking, in an absent way

## BARRETT BAYS

Responded to her laughter, joyous ways.  
For I was thinking of my life again,  
Of love that still eluded me, was bored  
Because I sat there, did not have the spirit  
To share her buoyancy — or was it such?  
Did she not ripple merriment to hide  
Her disappointment, wake me if she could?  
And spite of what I thought of her before  
That she had known another man or men,  
I thought now I was first. And to let down,  
Slope off the event, our parting for the day  
Have no abruptness, I invited her  
To luncheon, when I left her 'twas to meet  
Again at noon. We met and parted then.  
So now it seemed a thing achieved. Two weeks  
Elapsed before I telephoned her. Then  
The story we repeated as before,  
Same room and all. But meantime we had sat  
Some moments over tea, the orchestra  
Played Chopin for her.”

“ Then she handed me  
A little box, I opened it and found  
A locket too ornate, her picture in it,  
A little flag.”

“ So in that moment there  
Love came to me for Elenor Murray. Music,  
That poor pathetic locket, and her way  
So humble, so devoted, and the thought

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Of those months past, wherein she never swerved  
From ways of love, in spite of all my moods,  
Half-hearted, distant — these combined at once,  
And with a flame that rose up silently  
Consumed my heart with love.”

“ She went away,  
And left me hungering, lonely. She returned,  
And saw at last dubieties no more,  
The answering light for her within my eyes.”

“ I must recur a little here to say  
That at the first, first meeting it may be,  
With Janet, there at tea, she said to me  
She had signed for the war, would go to France,  
To nurse the soldiers. You cannot remember  
What people say at first, before you know,  
Have interest in them. Also at that time  
I had no interest in the war, believed  
The war would end before we took a hand.  
The war lay out of me, objectified  
Like news of earthquakes in Japan. And then  
As time went on she said: ‘ I do not know  
What day I shall be called, the time’s at hand.’  
I loathed the Germans then; but loathed the war,  
The hatred, lying, which it bred, the filth  
Spewed over Europe, from the war, on us  
At last. I loathed it all, and saw  
The spirit of the world debauched and fouled  
With blood and falsehood.”

## BARRETT BAYS

“ Elenor found in me  
Cold water for her zeal, and even asked:  
‘ Are you pro-German? — no!’ I tried to say  
What stirred in me, she did not comprehend,  
And went her way with saying: ‘ I shall serve,  
O, glorious privilege to serve, to give,  
And since this love of ours is tragedy,  
Cannot be blessed with children, or with home,  
It will be better if I die, am swept  
Under the tide of war with work.’ This girl  
Exhausted me with ardors, spoken faiths,  
And zeal which never tired, until at last  
I longed for her to go and make an end.  
What better way to end it? ”

“ April came,  
One day she telephoned me that to-morrow  
She left for France. We met that night and walked  
A wind swept boulevard by the lake, and she  
Was luminous, a spirit; tucked herself  
Under my coat, adored me, said to me:  
‘ If I survive I shall return to you,  
To serve you, help you, be your friend for life,  
And sacrifice my womanhood for you.  
You cannot marry me, in spite of that  
If I can be your comfort, give you peace,  
That will be marriage, all that God intends  
As marriage for me. You have blessed me, dear,  
With hope and happiness. And oh at last  
You did behold the war as good, you give me,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

You send me to the war. I serve for you,  
I serve the country in your name, your love,  
So blessed for you, your love.' ”

“ That night at two

I woke somehow as if an angel stood  
Beside the bed in light, beneficence,  
And found her head close to my heart — she woke  
At once with me, spoke dreamily ‘ Dear heart,’  
Then turned to sleep again. I loved her then.”

“ She left next day. An olden mood came back  
Which said, the end has come, and it is best.  
I left the city too, breathed freer then,  
Sought new companionships. But in three days  
My heart was sinking, sickness of the heart,  
Nostalgia took me. How to fight it off  
Became the daily problem; work, diversions  
Seemed best for cures. The malady progressed  
Beyond the remedies. My wife came back,  
Divined my trouble, laughed. And every day  
The papers pounded nerves with battle news;  
The bands were playing, soldiers marched the streets.  
And taggers on the corner every day  
Reminded you of suffering and of want.  
And orators were talking where you ate:  
Bonds must be bought — war — war was everywhere.  
There was no place remote to hide from it,  
And rest from its insistence. Then began  
Elenor Murray’s letters sent from France,

## BARRETT BAYS

Which told of what she did, and always said:  
' Would you were with me, serving in the war.  
If you could come and serve; they need you, dear;  
You could do much.' Until at last the war  
Which had lain out of me, objectified,  
Became a part of me, I saw the war,  
And felt the war through her, and every tune  
And every marching soldier, every word  
Spoken by orators said Elenor Murray.  
At dining places, theatres, pursued  
By this one thought of war and Elenor Murray;  
In every drawing room pursued, pursued  
In quiet places by the memories.  
I had no rest. The war and love of her  
Had taken body of me, soul of me,  
With madness, ecstasy, and nameless longing,  
Hunger and hope, fear and despair — but love  
For Elenor Murray with intenser flame  
Ran round it all."

“ At last all other things:  
Place in the world, my business, and my home,  
My wife if she be counted, sunk away  
To nothingness. I stood stripped of the past,  
Saw nothing but the war and Elenor,  
Saw nothing but the day of finding her  
In France, and serving there to be with her,  
Or near where I could see her, go to her,  
Perhaps if she was ill or needed me.  
And so I went to France, began to serve,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Went in the ordnance. In that ecstasy  
Of war, religion, love, found happiness;  
Became a part of the event, and cured  
My languors, boredom, longing, in the work;  
And saw the war as greatest good, the hand  
Of God through all of it to bring the world  
Beauty and Freedom, a millennium  
Of Peace and Justice."

" So the days went by  
With work and waiting, waiting for the hour  
When Elenor should have a furlough, come  
To Paris, see me. And she came at last."

" Before she came she wrote me, told me where  
To meet her first. ' At two o'clock,' she wrote,  
' Be on the landing back of the piano '  
Of a hotel she named. An ominous thought  
Passed through my brain, as through a room a bat  
Flits in and out. I read the letter over:  
How could this letter pass the censor? ' Escape  
The censor's eye? But eagerness of passion,  
And longing, love, submerged such thoughts as these.  
I walked the streets and waited, loitered through  
The Garden of the Tuilleries, watched the clocks,  
The lagging minutes, counted with their strokes.  
And then at last the longed for hour arrived.  
I reached the landing — what a meeting place!  
With pillars, curtains hiding us, a nook  
No one could see us in, unless he spied.



## BARRETT BAYS

And she was here, was standing by the corner  
Of the piano, very pale and worn,  
Looked down, not at me, pathos over her  
Like autumn light. I took her in my arms,  
She could not speak, it seemed. I could not speak.  
Dumb sobs filled heart and throat of us. And then  
I held her from me, looked at her, re-clasped  
Her head against my breast, with choking breath  
That was half whisper, half a cry, I said,  
'I love you, love you, now at last we're here  
Together, oh, my love!' She put her lips  
Against my throat and kissed it: 'Oh, my love,  
You really love me, now I know and see,  
My soul, my dear one,' Elenor breathed up  
The words against my throat."

"We took a suite:

Soft rugs upon the floor, a bed built up,  
And canopied with satin, on the wall  
Some battle pictures, one of Bonaparte,  
A bottle of crystal water on a stand  
And roses in a bowl — the room was sweet  
With odors, and so comfortable. Here we stood.  
'It's Paris, dear,' she said, 'we are together;  
You're serving in the war, how glorious!  
We love each other, life is good — so good!'  
That afternoon we saw the city a little,  
So many things occurred to prophesy,  
Interpret."

## DOMESDAY BOOK

“ And that night we saw the moon,  
One star above the Arc de Triomphe, over  
The chariot of bronze and leaping horses.  
Dined merrily and slept and woke together  
Beneath that satin canopy.”

“ In brief,  
The days went by with laughter and with love.  
We watched the Seine from bridges, in a spell  
There at Versailles in the Temple of Love  
Sat in the fading day.”

“ Upon the lawn  
She took her diary from her bag and read  
What she had done in France; years past as well.  
Began to tell me of a Simeon Strong  
Whom she was pledged to marry years before.  
How jealousy of Simeon Strong destroyed  
His love, and all because in innocence  
She had received some roses from a friend.  
That led to other men that she had known  
Who wished to marry her, as she said. But most  
She talked of Simeon Strong; then of a man  
Who had absorbed her life until she went  
In training as a nurse, a married man,  
Whom she had put away, himself forgetting  
A hopeless love he crushed. Until at last  
I said, no more, my dear — The past is dead,  
What is the past to me? It could not be  
That you could live and never meet a man



## DOMESDAY BOOK

God who creates us to this life, then why  
This agony of living, peace or war;  
This agony which grows greater, never less,  
And multiplies its sources with the days,  
Increases its perplexities with time,  
And gives the soul no rest. And why this love,  
This woman in my life. The mystery  
Of my own torture asked to be explained.  
And why I married whom I married, why  
She was content to stand far off and watch  
My crucifixion. Why?"

“ And with these thoughts  
Came thought of changing them. A wonder slipped  
About her diary in my brain. I paused,  
Said to myself, you have no right to spy  
Upon such secret records, yet indeed  
A devilish sense of curiosity  
Came as relaxment to my graver mood,  
As one will fetch up laughter to dispel  
Thoughts that cannot be quelled or made to take  
The form of action, clarity. I arose  
Took from her bag the diary, turned to see  
What entry she had made when first she came  
And gave herself to me. And look! The page  
Just opposite from this had words to show  
She gave herself to Gregory Wenner just  
The week that followed on the week in which  
She gave herself to me.”

## BARRETT BAYS

“ A glass of water,  
Before I can proceed! ” . . .

“ I reeled and struck  
The bed post. She awoke. I thought that death  
Had come with apoplexy, could not see,  
And in a spell vertiginous, with hands  
That shook and could not find the post, stood there  
Palsied from head to foot. Quick, she divined  
The event, the horror anyway, sprang out,  
And saw the diary lying at my feet.  
Before I gained control of self, could catch  
Or hold her hands, she seized it, threw it out  
The window on the street, and flung herself  
Face down upon the bed.”

“ Oh awful hell!  
What other entries did I miss, what shames  
Recorded since she left me, here in France?  
What was she then? A woman of one sin,  
Or many sins, her life filled up with treason,  
Since I had left her? ”

“ And now think of me:  
This monstrous war had entered me through her,  
Its passion, beauty, promise came through her  
Into my blood and spirit, swept me forth  
From country, life I knew, all settled things.  
I had gone mad through her, and from her lips  
Had caught the poison of the war, its hate,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Its yellow sentiment, its sickly dreams,  
Its lying ideals, and its gilded filth.  
And here she lay before me, like a snake  
That having struck, by instinct now is limp;  
By instinct knows its fangs have done their work,  
And merely lies and rests."

" I went to her,  
Pulled down her hands from eyes and shook her hard:  
What is this? Tell me all?"

" She only said:  
' You have seen all, know all.' "

" ' You do not mean  
That was the first and last with him?' She said,  
' That is the truth.' ' You lie,' I answered her.  
' You lie and all your course has been a lie:  
Your words that asked me to be true to you,  
That I could break your heart. The breasts you showed  
Flowering because of me, as you declared;  
Our intimacy of bodies in the dance  
Now first permitted you because of love;  
Your plaints for truth and for fidelity,  
Your fears, a practiced veteran in the game,  
All simulated. And your prayer to God  
For me, our love, your protests for the war,  
For service, sacrifice, your mother hunger,  
Are all elaborate lies, hypocrisies,  
Studied in coolest cruelty, and mockery

## BARRETT BAYS

Of every lovely thing, if there can be  
A holy thing in life, as there cannot,  
As you have proven it. The diary's gone —  
And let it go — you kept it from my eyes  
Which shows that there was more. What are you then,  
A whore, that's all, a masquerading whore,  
Not worthy of the hand that plies her trade  
In openness, without deceit. For if  
This was the first and only time with him  
Here is dissimulation month by month  
By word of mouth, in letters by the score;  
And here your willingness to take my soul  
And feed upon it. Knowing that my soul  
Through what I thought was love was caught and whirled  
To faith in the war, and faith in you as one  
Who symbolized the war as good, as means  
Of goodness for the world — and this deceit,  
Insane, remorseless, conscienceless, is worse  
Than what you did with him. I could forgive  
Disloyalty like that, but this deceit  
Is unforgivable. I go,' I said.  
I turned to leave. She rose up from the bed,  
'Forgive! Forgive!' she pleaded, 'I was mad,  
Be fair! Be fair! You took me, turned from me,  
Seemed not to want me, so I went to him.  
I cried the whole day long when first I gave  
Myself to you, for thinking you had found  
All that you wanted, left me, did not care  
To see me any more. I swear to you  
I have been faithful to you since that day

## DOMESDAY BOOK

When we heard Chopin played, and I could see  
You loved me, and I loved you. O be fair! ' . . .

Then Barrett Bays shook like an animal  
That starves and freezes. And the jury looked  
And waited till he got control of self  
And spoke again his horror and his grief: —  
“ I left her, went upon the silent streets,  
And walked the night through half insane, I think.  
Cannot remember what I saw that night,  
Have only blurs of buildings, arches, towers,  
Remember dawn at last, returning strength,  
And taking rolls and coffee, all my spirit  
Grown clear and hard as crystal, with a will  
As sharp as steel to find reality:  
To see life as it is and face its terrors,  
And never feel a tremor, bat an eye.  
Drink any cup to find the truth, and be  
A pioneer in a world made new again,  
Stripped of the husks, bring new faith to the world,  
Of souls devoted to themselves to make  
Souls truer, more developed, wise and fair!  
Write down the creed of service, and write in  
Self-culture, self-dependence, throw away  
The testaments of Jesus, old and new,  
Save as they speak and help the river life  
To mould our truer beings; the rest discard  
Which teaches compensation, to forgive  
That you may be forgiven, mercy show  
That mercy may be yours, and love your neighbor,



## BARRETT BAYS

Love so to gain — all balances like this  
Of doctrine for the spirit false and vile,  
Corrupted with such calculating filth;  
And if you'd be the greatest, be the servant —  
When one to be the greatest must be great  
In self, a light, a harmony in self,  
Perfected by the inner law, the works  
Done for the sake of beauty, for the self  
Without the hope of gain except the soul,  
Your one possession, grows a perfect thing  
If tended, studied, disciplined. While all  
This ethic of the war, the sickly creed  
Which Elenor Murray mouthed, but hides the will  
Which struggles still, would live, lies to itself,  
Lies to its neighbor and the world, and leaves  
Our life upon a wall of rotting rock  
Of village mortals, patriotism, lies!"

"And as for that, what did I see in Paris  
But human nature working in the war  
As everywhere it works in peace? Cabals,  
And jealousies and hatreds, greed alert;  
Ambition, cruelty, strife piled on strife;  
No peace in labor that was done for peace;  
Hypocrisy elaborate and rampant.  
Saw at first hand what coiled about the breast  
Of Florence Nightingale when she suffered, strove  
In the Crimean War, struck down by envy,  
Or nearly so. Oh, is it human nature,  
That fights like maggots in the rotting carcass?"

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Or is it human nature tortured, bound  
By artificial doctrines, creeds which all  
Pretend belief in, really doubt, resist  
And cannot live by? ”

“ If I had a thought  
Of charity toward this woman then  
It was that she, a little mind, had tried  
To live the faith against her nature, used  
A woman’s cunning to get on in life.  
For as I said it was her lies that hurt.  
And had she lied, had she been living free,  
Unshackled of our system, faith and cult,  
American or Christian, what you will?

“ She was a woman free or bound, but women  
Enslave and rule by sex. The female tigers  
Howl in the jungle when their dugs are dry  
For meat to suckle cubs. And Germany  
Of bullet heads and bristling pompadours,  
And wives made humble, cowed by basso brutes,  
Had women to enslave the brutes with sex,  
And make them seek possessions, land and food  
For breeding women and for broods.”

“ And now  
If women make the wars, yet nurse the sick,  
The wounded in the wars, when peace results,  
What peace will be, except a peace that fools  
The gaping idealist, all souls in truth

## BARRETT BAYS

But souls like mine? A peace that leaves the world  
Just where it was with women in command  
Who, weak but cunning, clinging to the faith  
Of Christ, therefore as organized and made  
A part, if not the whole of western culture.  
Away with all of this! Blow down the mists,  
The rainbows, give us air and cloudless skies.  
Give water to our fevered eyes, give strength  
To see what is and live it, tear away  
These clumsy scaffoldings, by which the mystics,  
Ascetics, mad-men all St. Stylites  
Would rise above the world of body, brain,  
Thirst, hunger, living, nature! Let us free  
The soul of man from sophists, logic spinners,  
The mad-magicians who would conjure death,  
Yet fear him most themselves, the coward hearts  
Who mouth eternal bliss, yet cling to earth  
And keep away from heaven."

" For it's true

Nature, or God, gives birth and also death.  
And power has never come to draw the sting  
Of death or make it pleasant, creed nor faith  
Prevents disease, old age and death at last.  
This truth is here and we must face it, or  
Lie to ourselves and cloud our brains with lies,  
Postponements and illusions, childish hopes!  
But lie most childish is the Christian myth  
Of Adam's fall, by which disease and death  
Entered the world, until the Savior came

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And conquered death. He did? But people die,  
Some millions slaughtered in the war! They live  
In heaven, say your Elenor Murrays, well,  
Who knows this? If you know it, why drop tears  
For people better off? How ludicrous  
The patch-work is! I leave it, turn again  
To what man in this world can do with life  
Made free of superstition, rules and faiths,  
That make him lie to self and to his fellows." . . .

And Barrett Bays, now warmed up to his work,  
Grown calmer, stronger, mind returned, that found  
Full courage for the thought, the word to say it  
Recurred to Elenor Murray, analyzed:—  
And now a final word: "This Elenor Murray,  
What was she, just a woman, a little life  
Swept in the war and broken? If no more,  
She is not worth these words: She is the symbol  
Of our America, perhaps this world  
This side of India, of America  
At least she is the symbol. What was she?  
A restlessness, a hunger, and a zeal;  
A hope for goodness, and a tenderness;  
A love, a sorrow, and a venturing will;  
A dreamer fooled but dreaming still, a vision  
That followed lures that fled her, generous, loving,  
But also avid and insatiable;  
An egoism chained and starved too long  
That breaks away and runs; a cruelty,  
A wilfulness, a dealer in false weights,

## BARRETT BAYS

And measures of herself, her duty, others,  
A lust, a slick hypocrisy and a faith  
Faithless and hollow. But at last I say  
She taught me, saved me for myself, and turned  
My steps upon the path of making self  
As much as I can make myself — my thanks  
To Elenor Murray!”

“ For that day I saw  
The war for what it was, and saw myself  
An artificial factor, working there  
Because of Elenor Murray — what a fool!  
I was not really needed, like too many  
Was just pretending, though I did not know  
That I was just pretending, saw myself  
Swept in this mad procession by a woman;  
And through myself I saw the howling mob  
Back in America that shouted hate,  
In God’s name, all the carriers of flags,  
The superheated patriots who did nothing,  
Gave nothing but the clapping of their hands,  
And shouts for freedom of the seas. The souls  
Who hated freedom on the sea or earth,  
Had, as the vile majority, set up  
Intolerable tyrannies in America,  
America that launched herself without  
A God or faith, but in the name of man  
And for humanity, so long accursed  
By Gods and priests — the vile majority!  
Which in the war, and through the war went on

## DOMESDAY BOOK

With other tyrannies as to meat and drink,  
Thought, speech, the mind in living — here was I  
One of the vile majority through a woman —  
And serving in the war because of her,  
And meretricious sentiments of her.  
You see I had the madness of the world,  
Was just as crazy as America.  
And like America must wake from madness  
And suffer, and regret, and build again.  
My soul was soiled, you see. And now I saw  
How she had pressed her lips against my soul  
And sapped my spirit in the name of beauty  
She simulated; for a loyalty  
Her lips averred; how as a courtesan  
She had made soft my tissues, like an apple  
Handled too much; how vision of me went  
Into her life sucked forth; how never a word  
Which ever came from her interpreted  
In terms of worth the war; how she had coiled  
Her serpent loins about me; how she draped  
Herself in ardors borrowed; how my arms  
Were mottled from the needle's scar where she  
Had shot the opiates of her lying soul;  
How asking truth, she was herself untrue;  
How she, adventuress in the war, had sought  
From lust grown stale, renewal of herself.  
And then at last I saw her scullery brows  
Fail out and fade beside the Republic's face,  
And leave me free upon the hills, who saw,  
Strong, seeking cleanliness in truth, her hand

## BARRETT BAYS

Which sought the cup worn smooth by leper lips  
Dipped in the fountain where the thirst of many  
Passionate pilgrims had been quenched,  
Not lifted up by me, nor yet befriended  
By the cleaner cup I offered. Now you think  
That I am hard. Philosophy is hard,  
And I philosophize, admit as well  
That I have failed, am full of faults myself,  
All faults, we'll say, but one, I trust and pray  
The fault of falsehood and hypocrisy." . . .

"I gave my work in Paris up — that day  
Made ready to return, but with this thought  
To use my wisdom for the war, do work  
For America that had no touch of her,  
No flavor of her nature, far removed  
From the symphony of sex, be masculine,  
Alone, and self-sufficient, needing nothing,  
No hand, no kiss, no mate, pure thought alone  
Directed to this work. I found the work  
And gave it all my energy."

"From then  
I wrote her nothing, though she wrote to me  
These more than hundred letters — here they are!  
Since you have mine brought to you from New York  
All written before she went to France, I think  
You should have hers to make the woman out  
And read her as she wrote herself to me.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The rest is brief. She cabled when she sailed,  
And wrote me from New York. While at LeRoy  
With Irma Leese she wrote me. Then that day  
She telephoned me when she motored here  
With Irma Leese, and said: 'Forgive, forgive,  
O see me, come to me, or let me come  
To you, you cannot crush me out. These months  
Of silence, what are they? Eternity  
Makes nothing of these months. I love you, never  
In all eternity shall cease to love you,  
Love makes you mine, and you must come to me  
Now or hereafter.' "

“And you see at last  
My soul was clear again, as clean and cold  
As our March days, as clear too, and the war  
Stood off envisioned for the thing it was.  
Peace now had come, which helped our eyes to see  
What dread event the war was. So to see  
This woman with these eyes of mine, made true  
And unpersuadable of her complaints and ways  
I gave consent and went.”

“Arriving first,  
I walked along the river till she came.  
And as I saw her, I looked through the tricks  
Of dress she played to win me, I could see  
How she arrayed herself before the mirror,  
Adjusting this or that to make herself  
Victorious in the meeting. But my eyes



## BARRETT BAYS

Were wizard eyes for her, and this she knew,  
Began at first to writhe, change color, flap  
Her nervous hands in gestures half controlled.  
I only said, 'Good morning,' took her hand,  
She tried to kiss me, but I drew away.  
'I have been true,' she said, 'I love you, dear,  
If I was false and did not love you, why  
Would I pursue you, write you, all against  
Your coldness and your silence? O believe me,  
The war and you have changed me. I have served,  
Served hard among the sufferers in the war,  
Sustained by love for you. I come to you  
And give my life to you, take it and use,  
Keep me your secret joy. I do not dream  
Of winning you in marriage. Here and now  
I humble self to you, ask nothing of you,  
Except your kindness, love again, if love  
Can come again to you — O this must be!  
It is my due who love you, with my soul,  
My body.'"

“‘No,’ I said, ‘I can forgive  
All things but lying and hypocrisy.’ . . .  
How could I trust her? She had kept from me  
The diary, threw it from the window, what  
Was life of her in France? Should I expunge  
This Gregory Wenner, what was life of her  
In France, I ask. And so I said to her:  
‘I have no confidence in you’—O well  
I told the jury all. But quick at once

## DOMESDAY BOOK

She showed to me, that if I could forgive  
Her course of lying, she was changed to me,  
The war had changed her, she was hard and wild,  
Schooled in the ways of soldiers, and in war.  
That beauty of her womanhood was gone,  
Transmuted into waywardness, distaste  
For simple ways, for quiet, loveliness.  
The adventuress in her was magnified,  
Cleared up and set, she had become a shrike,  
A spar hawk, and I loathed her for these ways  
Which she revealed, dropping her gentleness  
When it had failed her. Yes, I saw in her  
The war at last; its lying and its hate,  
Its special pleading, and its double dealing,  
Its lust, its greed, its covert purposes,  
Its passion out of hell which obelised  
Such noble things in man. Its crooked uses  
Of lofty spirits, flaming fires of youth,  
Young dreamers, lovers. And at last she said,  
As I have told the jury, what she did  
Was natural, and I cursed her. Then she shook,  
Turned pale, and reeled, I caught her, held her up,  
She died right in my arms! And this is all;  
Except that had I killed her and should spend  
My days in prison for it, I am free,  
My spirit being free."

"Who was this woman?"

This Elenor Murray was America;  
Corrupt, deceived, deceiving, self-deceived,

## BARRETT BAYS

Half-disciplined, half-lettered, crude and smart,  
Enslaved yet wanting freedom, brave and coarse,  
Cowardly, shabby, hypocritical,  
Generous, loving, noble, full of prayer,  
Scorning, embracing rituals, recreant  
To Christ so much professed; adventuresome;  
Curious, mediocre, venal, hungry  
For money, place, experience, restless, no  
Repose, restraint; before the world made up  
To act and sport ideals, go abroad  
To bring the world its freedom, having choked  
Freedom at home — the girl was this because  
These things were bred in her, she breathed them in  
Here where she lived and grew."

Then Barrett Bays stepped down  
And said, "If this is all, I'd like to go."  
Then David Borrow whispered in the ear  
Of Merival, and Merival conferred  
With Ritter and Llewellyn George and said:  
"We may need you again, a deputy  
Will take you to my house, and for the time  
Keep you in custody."

The deputy  
Came in and led him from the jury room.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

### ELENOR MURRAY

Coroner Merival took the hundred letters  
Which Elenor Murray wrote to Barrett Bays,  
Found some of them unopened, as he said,  
And read them to the jury. Day by day  
She made a record of her life, and wrote  
Her life out hour by hour, that he might know.  
The hundredth letter was the last she wrote.  
And this the Coroner found unopened, cut  
The envelope and read it in these words:

“ You see I am at Nice. If you have read  
The other letters that I wrote you since  
Our parting there in Paris, you will know  
About my illness; but I write you now  
Some other details.”

“ I went back to work  
So troubled and depressed about you, dear,  
About myself as well. I thought of you,  
Your suffering and doubt, perhaps your hate.  
And since you do not write me, not a line  
Have written since we parted, it may be  
Hatred has entered you to make distrust  
Less hard to bear. But in no waking hour,  
And in no hour of sleep when I have dreamed,  
Have you been from my mind. I love you, dear,  
Shall always love you, all eternity

ELENOR MURRAY

Cannot exhaust my love, no change shall come  
To change my love. And yet to love you so,  
And have no recompense but silence, thoughts  
Of your contempt for me, make exquisite  
The suffering of my spirit. Could I sing  
My sorrow would enchant the world, or write,  
I might regain your love with beauty born  
Out of this agony."

"When I returned

I had three typhoid cases given me.  
And with that passion which you see in me  
I gave myself to save them, took this love  
Which fills my heart for you and nursed them with it;  
Said to myself to keep me on my feet  
When I was staggering from fatigue, 'Give now  
Out of this love, it may be God's own gift  
With which you may restore these boys to health.  
What matter if he love you not.' And so  
For twelve hours day by day I waged with death  
A slowly winning battle."

"As they rallied,

But when my strength was almost spent — what comes?  
This Miriam Fay writes odiously to me.  
She has heard something of our love, or sensed  
Some dereliction, since she learned that I  
Had not been to confessional. Anyway  
She writes me, writes our head-nurse. All at once  
A cloud of vile suspicion, like a dust

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Blown from an alley takes my breath away,  
And blinds my eyes. With all these things piled up,  
My labors and my sorrow, your neglect,  
My fears of a dishonorable discharge  
From service, which I love, I faint, collapse,  
Have streptococcus of the throat, and lie  
Two weeks in fever, sleepless, and with thoughts  
Of you, and what may happen, my disgrace.  
But suffering brought me friends, the officers  
Perhaps had heard the scandal, but they knew  
My heart was in the work. The major who  
Was the attending doctor of these boys  
I broke myself with nursing, cared for me,  
And cheered me with his praise. And so it was  
Your little soldier, still I call myself,  
Your little soldier, though you own me not,  
Turned failure into victory, won by pain  
Befriending hands. The major kept me here  
And intercepted my discharge, procured  
My furlough here in Nice."

" I rose from bed,  
Went back to work, in nine days failed again,  
This time with influenza; for three weeks  
Was ill enough to die, for all the while  
My fever raged, my heart was hurting too,  
Because of you. When I got up again  
I looked a ghost, was weaker than a child,  
At last came here to Nice."

ELENOR MURRAY

This is the hundredth  
Letter that I've written since we parted.  
My heart is tired, dear, I shall write no more.  
You shall have silence for your silence, yet  
When I am silent, trust me none the less,  
Believe I love you. If you say that I  
Have hidden secrets, have not told you all,  
The diary flung away to keep my life  
Beyond your eye's inspection, still I say  
Where is your right to know what lips I've kissed,  
What hopes or dreams I cherished in the past  
Before I knew you. If you still accuse  
My spirit of deceit, hypocrisy  
In lifting up my flower of love to you  
Fresh, as it seemed, with morning dew, not tears,  
I have my own defense for that, you'll see.  
Or lastly, if your love is turned to gall  
Because, as you discovered, body of love  
Was given to Gregory Wenner, after you  
Had come to me in love and chosen me  
As servant of you in the war, I write  
To clear myself to you respecting that,  
And re-insist 'twas body of love alone,  
Not love I gave, and what I gave was given  
Because you won me, left me, did not claim  
As wholly yours what you had won. But now,  
As I have hope of life beyond the grave,  
As I love God, though serving Him but ill,  
I say to you, I have been wholly yours  
In spirit and in body since the day

## DOMESDAY BOOK

I gave to you the locket, sat with you  
And heard the waltz of Chopin, six days after  
I went with Gregory Wenner. I explain  
Why I did this, shall mention it no more;  
You must be satisfied or go your way  
In bitterness and hatred."

" But first, my love,

As spirits equal and with equal rights,  
Or privilege of equal wrongs, have I  
Demanded former purity of you?  
I have repelled revelations of your past;  
Have never questioned of your marriage, asked,  
Which might be juster, rights withdrawn from her;  
May rightly think, since you and she have life  
In one abode together, that you live  
As marriage warrants. And above it all  
Have I not written you to go your way,  
Find pleasures where you could, have only begged  
That you keep out of love, continue to give  
Your love to me? And why? Be cynical,  
And think I gave you freedom as a gallant  
That I might with a quiet conscience take  
Such freedom for myself. It is not true:  
I've learned the human body, know the male,  
And know his life is motile, does not rest,  
And wait, as woman's does, cannot do so.  
So understanding have put down distaste,  
That you should fare in freedom, in my heart  
Have wished that love or ideals might sustain



## ELENOR MURRAY

Your spirit; but if not, my heart is filled  
With happiness, if you love me. Take these thoughts  
And with them solve your sorrow for my past,  
Your loathing of it, if you feel that way  
However bad it be, whatever sins  
Imagination in you stirred depicts  
As being in my past."

" Men have been known  
Whom women made fifth husbands, more than that.  
Not my case, I'll say that, and if you face  
Reality, and put all passion love  
Where nature puts it by the side of love  
Which custom favors, you have only left  
The matter of the truth to grasp, believe,  
See clearly and accept: Do I swear true  
I love you, and since loving you am faithful,  
Cannot be otherwise, nor wish to be?"

" Dear, listen and be fair. You did not love me  
When first I came to you. You did not ask,  
Because of love, a faithfulness; in truth  
You did not ask a faithfulness at all.  
But then and theretofore you treated me  
As woman to be won, a happiness  
To be achieved and put aside. Be fair,  
This was your mood. But if you loved me then,  
Or soon thereafter loved me, as I know,  
What should I do? I loved you, am a woman.  
At last behold your love, am lifted, thrilled.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

See what I thought was love before was nothing;  
Know I was never loved before you loved me;  
And know as well I never loved before;  
Know all the former raptures of my heart  
As buds in March closed hard and scentless, never  
The June before for my heart! O, my love,  
What should I do when this most priceless gift  
Was held up like a crown within your hands  
To place upon my brows — what should I do?  
Take you aside and say, here is the truth,  
Here's Gregory Wenner — what's the good of that?  
How had it benefited you or me,  
Increased your love, or founded it upon  
A surer rock than beauty? Hideous truth!  
Useless too often, childish in such case.  
You would have suffered, turned from me, and lost  
The rapture which I gave you, and if rapture  
Be not a prize, where in this world so much  
Of ugliness and agony prevails,  
I do not know our life."

“ But just suppose  
I gave you rapture, beauty — you concede  
I gave you these, that's why you suffer so:  
You choose to think them spurious since you found  
I knew this Gregory Wenner, are they so?  
They are as real in spite of Gregory Wenner  
As if my lips had been a cradled child's.  
But just suppose, as I began to say,  
You never had discovered Gregory Wenner,

## ELENOR MURRAY

And had the rapture, beauty which you had,  
How stands the case? Was I not justified  
In hiding Gregory Wenner to preserve  
The beauty and the rapture which you craved?  
Dear, it was love of beauty which impelled  
What you have called deceit, it was my woman's  
Passionate hope to give the man she loved  
The beauty which he saw in her that inspired  
My acting, as you phrase it, an elaborate  
Hypocrisy, an ugly word from you! . . .  
But listen, dear, how spirit works in love:  
When you beheld me pure, I would be pure;  
As virginal, I would be virginal;  
As innocent, I would be innocent;  
As truthful, constant, so I would be these  
Though to be truthful, constant when I loved you  
Came to me like my breath, as natural.  
So I would be all things to you for love,  
Fill full your dreams, your vision of my soul  
For now and future days, but make myself  
In days before I knew you what you thought,  
Believed and cherished. Hence if you combine  
The thought that what I was did not concern you,  
With fear that if you knew, your heart would change;  
And with these join that passionate zeal of love  
To be your lover, wholly beautiful,  
You have the exposition of my soul  
In its elaborate deceit,— your words."

"Some fifty years ago a man and woman

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Are talking in a room, say certain things,  
We were not there! We two are with each other  
Somewhere, and fifty years from now, we two  
Will look to after souls who were not there  
Like figures in a crystal globe; I mean  
To lift to light the wounds of brooding love,  
And show you that the world contains events  
Of which we live in ignorance, if we know  
They hurt us with their mystery, coming near  
In our soul's cycle, somehow. But the dead,  
And what they lived, what are they? — what the things  
Of our dead selves to selves who are alive,  
And live the hour that's given us? ”

“ What's your past

To me, beloved, if your soul and body  
Are mine to-day, not only mine, but made  
By living more my own, more rich for me,  
More truly harmonized with me? Believe me  
You are my highest hope made real at last,  
The climax of my love life, I accept  
Whatever passed in rooms in years gone by;  
Whatever contacts, raptures, pains or hopes  
As schooling of your soul to make it precious,  
And for my worship, my advancement, kneel  
And thank the God of mysteries and wisdom  
Who made you for me, let me find you, love you! ”

“ Now of myself a word. In years to come  
These words I write will seem all truth to you,

## ELENOR MURRAY

Their prism colors, violet and red,  
Will fade away and leave them in the light  
Arranged and reasonable and wholly true.  
Then you will read the words: I found you, dear,  
After a life of pain; and you will see  
My spirit like a blossom that you watch  
From budding to unfolding, knowing thus  
How it matured from day to day. I say  
My life has been all pain, I see at first  
A father and a mother linked in strife.  
Am thrown upon my girlhood's strength to teach,  
Earn money for my schooling, would know French;  
I studied Greek a little, gave it up,  
Distractions, duties, came too fast for me.  
I longed to sing, took lessons, lack of money  
Ended the lessons. But above it all  
My heart was like an altar lit with flame,  
Aspired to heaven, asked for sacrifice,  
For incense to be bright, more beautiful  
For beauty's sake. And in my soul's despair,  
And just to use this vital flame, I turned  
To God, the church. You must be stone to hear  
Such words as these and not relent, an image  
Of basalt which I pray to not to see  
And not to hear! But listen! look at me,  
Did I become a drifter, wholly fail?  
Did I become a common woman, turn  
To common life and ways? Can you dispute  
My eyes were fixed upon a lovelier life,  
Have never gaze withdrawn from loveliness?

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Did I give up, or break, turn to the flesh,  
Pleasures, the solace of the senses — No!  
Where some take drink to ease their hurts and dull  
Their disappointments, I renewed my will  
To sacrifice and service, work, who saw  
These things in essence may be drink as well,  
And bring the end, oblivion while you live,  
But bring supremacy instead of failure,  
Collapse, disgust and fears. Think what you will  
Of me for Gregory Wenner, and imagine  
The worst you may, I stand here as I am,  
With my life proven! And to end the pain  
I went to nurse the soldiers in the war  
With thoughts that if I died in service, good!  
Not that I gladly give up life, I love it.  
But life must be surrendered; let it be  
In service, as some end it up in drink,  
Or opium or lust. Beloved heart,  
I know my will is stronger than my vision,  
That passion masters judgment; that my love  
For love and life and beauty are too much  
For gifts like mine; I know that I am dumb,  
Songless, without articulate words — but still  
My very dumbness is a kind of speech  
Which some day will flood down your deafened rocks,  
And sweep my meaning over you.”

“ Well, now

Why did I turn to Gregory from you?  
I did not love you or I had not done it.

## ELENOR MURRAY

You did not love me or I had not done it.  
I loved him once, he had been good to me.  
He was an old familiar friend and touch. . . .  
Farewell, if it must be, but save me grief,  
The greatest agony: Be brave and strong,  
Be all that God requires your soul to be,  
O, give me not this cup of poison — this:  
That I have been your cause of bitterness;  
Have stopped your growth and introverted you,  
Given you eyes that see but lies and lust  
In human nature, evil in the world —  
Eyes that God meant to see the good and strive  
For goodness. If I drove you from the war,  
Made you distrust its purpose and its faith,  
Triumphant over selfishness and wrong,  
Oh, leave me with the hope that peace will come,  
And vision once again to bless your life.  
Behold me as America, taught but half,  
Wayward and thoughtless, fighting for a chance;  
Denied its ordered youth, thrown into life  
But half prepared, so seeking to emerge  
Out of a tangled blood, and out of the earth  
A creature of the earth that strives to win  
A soul, a voice. Behold me thus — forgive!  
Take from my life the beauty that you found,  
Nothing can kill that beauty if you press  
Its blossom to your heart, and with it rise  
To nobleness, to duty, give your life  
To our America.”

## DOMESDAY BOOK

“ The Lord bless you,  
And make his face to shine upon you, and  
Be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance  
Upon you, give you peace, both now and ever  
More. Amen!”

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So Elenor's letters ended  
The evidence. The afternoon was spent.  
The inquest was adjourned till ten o'clock  
Next morning. They arose and left the room. . . .  
And Merival half-ill went home. Next day  
He lounged with books and had the doctor in,  
And read his mail, more letters, articles  
About the inquest, Elenor. And from France  
A little package came. And here at last  
Is Elenor Murray's diary! Merival turns  
And finds the entries true to Barrett Bays;  
Some word, a letter too from France which says:  
The sender learned the name by tracing out  
A number in the diary, heard the news  
Of Elenor Murray from the paper at home  
In Illinois. And of the diary this:  
He got it from a poilu who was struck  
By this same diary on the cheek. A slap  
That stung him, since the diary had been thrown  
By Elenor Murray from the second story.  
This poilu, being tipsy, raved and thought  
Some challenger had struck him. Roaring so  
He's taken in. Some weeks elapse, he meets  
Our soldiers from the States, and shows the diary,



## ELENOR MURRAY

And tells the story, has the diary read  
By this American, gives up the diary  
For certain drinks. And this American  
Has sent it to the coroner.

### A letter

To Merival from an old maiden aunt,  
Who's given her life to teaching, pensioned now  
And visiting at Madison, Wisconsin.  
Aunt Cynthia writes to Merival and says:  
" I know you are fatigued, a little tired  
With troubles of the lower plane of life.  
Quit thinking of the war and Elenor Murray.  
Each soul should use its own divinity  
By mastering nature outward and within.  
Do this by work or worship, Soul's control,  
Philosophy, by one or more or all.  
Above them all be free. This is religion,  
And all of it. Books, temples, dogmas, rituals  
Or forms are details only. By these means  
Find God within you, prove that you and God  
Are one, not several, justify the ways  
Of God to man, to speak the western way.  
I wish you could be here while I am here  
With Arielle, she is a soul, a woman.  
You need a woman in your life, my dear —  
I met her in Calcutta five years since,  
She and her husband toured the world — and now  
She is a widow these two years. I started  
Arielle in the wisdom of the East.

## DOMESDAY BOOK

That avid mind of hers devours all things.  
She is an adept, but she thinks her sense  
Of fun and human nature as the source  
Of laughter and of tears keep her from being  
A mystic, though she uses Hindu thought  
And practice for her soul."

" I'd like to send

Some pictures of her, if she'd let me do it:  
Arielle with her dogs upon the lawn,  
Her arms about their necks. Or Arielle  
About her flowers. I've another one,  
Arielle on her favorite horse: another,  
Arielle by her window, hand extended,  
The very soul of rhythm; and another,  
Arielle laughing like a rising sun,  
No one can laugh as she does. For you see  
Her outward soul is love, her inward soul  
Is wisdom and that makes her what she is:  
A Robin Goodfellow, a Puck, a girl,  
A prankish wit, a spirit of bright tears,  
A queenly woman, clothed in majesty,  
A rapture and a solace, comrade, friend,  
A lover of old women such as I;  
A mother to young children, for she keeps  
A brood of orphans in her little town.  
She is a will as disciplined as steel,  
Has suffered and grown wise. Her tenderness  
Is hidden under words so brief and pure  
You cannot sense the tenderness in all

## ELENOR MURRAY

Until you read them over many times.  
She is a lady bountiful, who gives  
As prodigally as nature, and she asks  
No gifts from you, but gets them anyway,  
Because all spirits pour themselves to her.  
If I were taking for America  
A symbol, it would be my Arielle  
And not your Elenor Murray."

" Here's her life!

Her father died when she was just a child,  
Leaving a modest fortune to a widow,  
Arielle's mother, also other children.  
After a time the mother went to England  
And settled down in Sussex. There the mother  
Was married to a scoundrel, mad-man, genius,  
Who tyrannized the household, whipped the children.  
So Arielle at fourteen ran away.  
She pined for her Wisconsin and America.  
She went to Madison, or near the place,  
And taught school in the country, much the same  
As Elenor Murray did.

" Now here is something:

Behold our world, humanity, the groups  
Of people into states, communities,  
Full up of powers and virtues, aid and light —  
Friends, helpers, understanders of the soul.  
It may be just the status of enlightenment,  
But I think there are brothers of the light,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And powers around us; for if Elenor Murray  
Half-fails, is broken, here is Arielle  
Who with the surer instinct finds the springs  
Of health and life. And so, I say, if I  
Had daughters, and were dying, leaving them,  
I should not fear; for I should know the world  
Would care for them and give them everything  
They had the strength to take.”

“ Here’s Arielle.

She teaches school and studies — O that wag —  
She posts herself in Shakespeare, forms a class  
Of women thrice her age and teaches them,  
Adds that way to her earnings. Just in time —  
Such things are always opportune, a man  
Comes by and sees her spirit, says to her  
You may read Plato, and she reads and passes  
To Kant and Schopenhauer. So it goes  
Until by twenty all her brain is seething  
With knowledge and with dreams. She is beloved  
By all the people of the country-side,  
Besought and honored — yet she keeps to self,  
Has hardly means enough, since now she sends  
Some help to mother who has been despoiled,  
Abandoned by the mad-man.”

“ Then one spring

A paper in Milwaukee gives a prize,  
A trip to Europe, to the one who gets  
The most subscriptions in a given time —

## ELENOR MURRAY

And Arielle who has so many friends —  
Achievement brings achievement, friends bring friends —  
Finds rallying support and wins the prize.  
Is off to Europe where she meets the man  
She married when returned.”

“ He is a youth  
Of beauty and of promise, yet a soul  
Who riots in the sunlight, honey of life.  
And gets his wings gummed in the poisonous sweet.  
And Arielle one morning wakes to find  
A horror on her hands: her husband's found  
Dead in a house of ill-fame. She is calm  
Out of that rhythm, sense of beauty which  
Makes her a power, all her deeds a song.  
She lays the body under the dancing muses  
There in the wondrous library and flings  
A purple robe across it, kneels and lays  
Her sunny head against it, says a prayer.  
She had been constant, loyal even to dreams,  
To this wild youth, whose errant ways she knew.  
Now don't you see the contrast? I refrain  
From judging Elenor Murray, but I say  
One thing is beautiful and one is not.  
And Arielle is beautiful as a spirit,  
And Elenor is somewhat beautiful,  
But streaked and mottled, too. Say what you will  
Of freedom, nature, body's rights, no less  
Honor and constancy are beautiful,  
And truth most beautiful. And Arielle

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Could kneel beside the body of her dead,  
Who had neglected her so constantly,  
And say a prayer of thankfulness that she  
Had honored him throughout those seven years  
Of married life — she prayed so — why, she says  
That prayer was worth a thousand stolen raptures  
Offered her in the years of life between.”

“ Now here she was at thirty  
Left to a mansion there in Madison.  
Her husband lived there; it was life, you know,  
For her to meet one of her neighborhood  
In Europe, though a stranger until then.  
And here is Arielle in her mansion, priestess  
Amid her treasures, beauties, for this man  
Has left her many thousands, and she lives  
Among her books and flowers, rides and walks,  
And frolics with her dogs, and entertains.” . . .

And as the Coroner folded the letter out  
A letter from this Arielle fell, which read:  
“ We have an aunt in common, Cynthia.  
I know her better than you do, I think,  
And love her better too. You men go off  
With wandering and business, leave these aunts,  
And precious kindred to be found by souls  
Who are more kindred, maybe. I have heard  
Most everything about you, of your youth  
Your schooling, shall I say your sorrow too?  
Admire your life, have studied Elenor,

## ELENOR MURRAY

As I have had the chance or got the word.  
And what your aunt writes in advice I like,  
Approve of and commend to you. You see  
I leap right over social rules to write,  
And speak my mind. So many friends I've made  
By searching out and asking. Why delay?  
Time slips away like moving clouds, but Life  
Says to the wise make haste. Is there a soul  
You'd like to know? Then signal it. I light  
From every peak a beacon fire, my peaks  
Are new found heights of vision, reaching them  
I either see a beacon light, or flash  
A beacon light. And thus it was I found  
Your Cynthia and mine, and now I write.  
I have a book to send you, show that way  
How much I value your good citizenship,  
Your work as coroner. I had the thought  
Of coroners as something like horse doctors —  
Your aunt says you're as polished as a surgeon.  
When I was ripe for Shakespeare some one brought  
His books to me; when I was ripe for Kant,  
I found him through a friend. I know about you,  
I sense you too, and I believe you need  
The spiritual uplifting of the Gita.  
You haven't read it, have you? No! you haven't.  
I wish that Elenor Murray might have read it.  
I grieve about that girl, you can't imagine  
How much I grieve. Now write me, coroner,  
What is your final judgment of the girl."

## DOMESDAY BOOK

“ I have so many friends who love me, always  
New friends come by to give me wisdom — you  
Can teach me, I believe, a man like you  
So versed in life. You must have learned new things  
Exploring in the life of Elenor Murray.  
I was about to write you several times.  
I loved that girl from all I heard of her.  
She must have had some faculty or fault  
That thwarted her, and left her, so to speak,  
Just looking into promised lands, but never  
Possessing or enjoying them — poor girl!  
And here she flung her spirit in the war  
And wrecked herself — it makes me sorrowful.  
I went to Europe through a prize I won,  
And saw the notable places — but this girl  
Who hungered just as much as I, saw nothing  
Or little, gave her time to labor, nursing —  
It is most pitiful, if you’ll believe me  
I’ve wept about your Eleanor. Write me now  
What is your final judgment of the girl? ” . . .

So Merival read these letters, fell asleep.  
Next day was weaker, had a fever too,  
And took to bed at last. He had to fight  
Six weeks or more for life. When he was up  
And strong enough he called the jury in  
And at his house they talked the case and supped.



## THE JURY DELIBERATES

### THE JURY DELIBERATES

The jurymen are seated here and there  
In Merival's great library. They smoke,  
And drink a little beer or Scotch. Arise  
At times to read the evidence taken down,  
And typed for reference. Before them lie  
Elenor Murray's letters, all the letters  
Written to Merival — there's Alma Bell's,  
And Miriam Fay's, letters anonymous.  
The article of Roberts in the *Dawn*,  
That one of Demos, Hogos; a daily file  
Of Lowell's *Times* — Lowell has festered now  
Some weeks, a felon-finger in a stall.  
And where is Barrett Bays? In Kankakee  
Where Elenor Murray's ancestor was kept.  
The strain and shame had broken him; a fear  
Fell on him of a consequence when the coroner  
Still kept him with a deputy. He grew wild,  
Attacked the deputy, began to wander  
And show some several selves. A multiple  
Spirit of devils had him. Dr. Burke  
Went over him and found him mad.

And now

The jury meet amid a rapid shift  
Of changes, mist and cloud. The man is sick  
Who administers the country. Has come back  
To laud the pact of peace; his auditors

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Turn silently away, whole states assemble  
To hear and turn away, sometimes to heckle.  
And if a mattoid emperor caused the war,  
And Elenor Murrays put the emperor down,  
The emperor, could he laugh at all, can laugh  
To see a country, bent to spend its last  
Dollar, its blood to the last drop, having spent  
Enough of these, go mad as Barrett Bays.  
And like a headless man, seen in a dream,  
Go capering in an ecstasy of doubt,  
Regret and disillusion. He can laugh  
To see the pact, which took the great estate,  
Once his and God's, and wrapt it as with snakes  
That stung and sucked, rejected in the land  
That sent these Elenor Murrays to make free  
The world from despotism. See that very land  
Crop despotisms — so the jury sees  
Convened to end the case of Elenor Murray. . . .

And Rev. Maiworm, juryman, gives his thought  
To conquest of the world for Christ, and says  
The churches must unite to free the world  
From war and sin. Result? Why less and less  
Homes like the Murray home, where husband, wife,  
Live in dissension. More and more of schools  
For Elenor Murrays. Happy marriages  
Will be the rule, our Elenors will find  
Good husbands, quiet hearths, a competence.  
And Isaac Newfeldt said: "You talk pish-posh.  
You go about at snipping withered leaves,

## THE JURY DELIBERATES

And picking blasted petals — take the root,  
Get at the soil — you cannot end these wars  
Until you solve the feeding problem. Quit  
Relying on your magic to make bread  
With five loaves broken, raise a bigger crop  
Of wheat, and get it to the mouths of men.  
And as for sin — what is it? — All of sin  
Lies in the customs, comes from how you view  
The bread and butter matter; all your gods  
And sons of God are guardians of the status  
Of business and of money; sin a thing  
Which contradicts, or threatens banks and wharves.  
And as for that your churches now control  
As much as human nature can digest  
A dominance like that. And what's the state  
Of things in Christendom? Why, wars, and want  
And many Elenor Murrays. Tyrannies  
Are like as pea and pea; you shall not drink,  
Or read, or talk, or trade, are from one pod.  
What would I do? Why, socialize the world,  
Then leave men free to live or die, let nature  
Go decimating as she will, and weed  
The worthless with disease or alcohol —  
You won't see much of that, however, if  
You socialize the world."

“ And David Barrow  
Spoke up and said: “ No ism is enough.  
The question is, Is life worth living, good  
Or bad? If bad, I think that Elenor Murray had

## DOMESDAY BOOK

As good a life as any. Here we've sat  
These weeks and heard these stories — nothing new ;  
And as to waste, our time is wasted here,  
If there were better things to do ; and yet  
Perhaps there is no better. I've enjoyed  
This work, association. Well, you're told  
To judge not, and that means to judge not man ;  
You are not told to judge not God. And so  
I judge Him. And again your Elenor Murrays,  
Your human being cannot will his way,  
But God's omnipotent, and where He fails  
He should be censured. Why does He allow  
A world like this, and suffer earthquakes, storms,  
The sinking of *Titanics*, cancers? Why  
Suffer these wars, this war? — Talk of the riffles  
That flowed from Elenor Murray — here's a wave  
Of tidal power, stirred by a greedy coot  
Who called himself an emperor! And look  
Our land, America, is ruined, slopped  
For good, or for our lives with filth and stench ;  
So that to live here takes what strength you have,  
None left for living, as a man should live.  
And this America once free and fair  
Is now the hatefulest, commonest group of men,  
Women and children in the Occident.  
What's life here now? Why, boredom, nothing else. . . .  
Why pity Elenor Murray? Gottlieb Gerald  
Told of her home life ; it was good enough,  
Average American, or better. Schools  
She had in plenty, what would she have done

## THE JURY DELIBERATES

With courses to the end in music, art?  
She was not happy. Elenor had a brain,  
And brains and happiness are at enmity.  
And if the world goes on some thousand years,  
The race as much advanced beyond us now  
In feeling, thought, as we are now beyond  
Pinthecanthropus, say, why, all will see  
What I see now;— 'twere better if the race  
Had never risen. All analogies  
Of nature show that death of man is death.  
He plants his seed and dies, the resurrection  
Is not the man, but is the child that grows  
From sperm he sows. The grain of wheat that sprouts  
Is not the stalk that bore it. Now suppose  
We get the secret in a thousand years,  
Can prove that death's the end, analogies  
Put by with amber, frogs' legs — tell me then  
What opiate will still the shrieks of men?  
But some of us know now, and I am one.  
There is no heaven for me; and as for those  
Who make a heaven to get out of this —  
You gentlemen who call life good, the world  
The work of God's perfection; yet invent  
A heaven to rest in from this world of woe —  
You do not wish to go there; and resort  
To cures and Christian Science to stay here!  
Which shows you are not sure. And thus we have  
Your Christian saying at heart that life is bad,  
And heaven is good, but not so good and sure  
That you will hurry to it. Why, I'll prove

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The Christian pessimist, as well as I.  
He says life is so bad it has no meaning,  
Unless there be a future; and I say  
Life's bad, and if no future, then is worse.  
And as it has no future, is a hell.  
This girl was soaked in opiates to the last.  
Religion, love for Barrett Bays, believed  
That God is love. Love is a word to me  
That has no meaning but in terms of man.  
And if a man cause war, or suffer war,  
When he could stop it, do we say he loves?  
Why call God love who can prevent a war?  
To chasten us, to better, purge our sins?  
Well, if it be then we are bettered, purged  
When William Hohenzollern goes to war  
And makes the whole world crazy."

“ Understand

I do not mock, I pity man and life.  
No man has sat here who has suffered more,  
Seeing the life of Elenor Murray, through  
Her life beholding life, our country's life.  
I pity man and life. I curse the scheme  
Which wakes the senseless clay to lips that bleed,  
And eyes that weep, and hearts that agonize,  
Then in an instant make them clay again!  
And for it all no reason, that the reason  
Can bring to light to stand the light.”

## THE JURY DELIBERATES

“ And yet

I'd make life better, food and shelter better  
And wider happiness, and fuller love.  
We're travelers on a ship that has no bourne  
But rocks, for us. On such a ship 'twere wise  
To have the daily comforts, foolish course  
To neither eat, nor sleep, keep warm, nor sing.  
But only walk the rainy deck and wait.  
The little opiates of happiness  
Would make the sailing better, though we know  
The trip is nowhere and the rocks will sink  
The portless steamer.”

“ Is it portless? ” asked  
Llewellyn George, “ you're leaping to a thought,  
And overlook a world of intimations,  
And hints of truth. I grant you take this race  
That lives to-day, and make the world a boat  
There is no port for us as human lives  
In this our life. But look, you see the race  
Has climbed, a mountain trail, and looks below  
From certain heights to-day at man the beast.  
We scan a half a million years of man  
From caves to temples, gestures, beacon fires  
To wireless. Call that mechanical,  
And power developed over tools. But here  
Is mystery beyond these.— What of powers,  
Devotions, aspirations, sacred flame  
Which masters nature, worships life, defies  
Death to obstruct it, hungers for the right,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

The truth, hates wrong, and by that passion wills  
All art, all beauty, goodness, and creates  
Those living waters of increasing life  
By which man lives, and has to-day the means  
Of fuller living. Here's a realm of richness,  
Beyond and separate from material things,  
Your aeroplanes or conquests. Now I put  
This question to you, David Barrow, what  
But God who is and has some end for life,  
And gives it meaning, though we see it not --  
What is it in the heart of man which lifts,  
Sustains him to the truth, the harmony,  
The beauty say of loyalty, or truth  
Or art, or science? lighting lamps for men  
To walk by, men who hate the lamps, the hand  
That lights? What is this spirit, but the spirit  
Of Something which moves through us, to an end,  
And by its constancy in man made constant  
Proclaims an end? There's Bruno, Socrates,  
There's Washington who might have lost his life,  
Why do these men cling to the vision, hope?  
When neither poverty, nor jeers, nor flames,  
Nor cups of poison stay? Who say thereby  
That death is nothing, but this life of ours,  
Which can be shaped to truth and harmony,  
And rising flame of spirit, giving light,  
Is everything worth while, must be lived so  
And if not lived so, then there's death indeed,  
By turning from the voice that says that man  
Must still aspire. And why aspire if death



## THE JURY DELIBERATES

Ends us, the scheme? And all this realm of spirit,  
Of love for truth and beauty, is the play  
Of shadows on the tomb?"

"Now take this girl:

She knew before she sailed to France, this man,  
This Barrett Bays was mad about her — knew  
She could stay here and have him, live with him,  
And thus achieve a happiness. And she knew  
To leave him was to make a chance to lose him.  
But then you say she knew he'd tire of her,  
And left for France. And still that happiness  
Before he tired would be hers. You see  
This spirit I'd delineate working here:  
To sacrifice and by the sacrifice  
Rise to a bigger spirit, make it truer;  
Then bring that truer spirit to her love  
For Barrett Bays, and not just loll and slop  
In love to-day. Why does she wish to give  
A finer spirit to this Barrett Bays?  
And to that end take life in hand? It's this:  
My Something, God at work. You say it's woman  
In sublimate of passion — call it that.  
Why sublimate a passion? All her life  
This girl aspires — you think to win a man?  
But win a man with what? With finest self  
Make this her contribution to these riches,  
Which Bruno and the others filled so full.  
You see this Something going on, but races  
Come up, express themselves and pass away;

## DOMESDAY BOOK

But yet this Something manifests itself  
Through souls like Elenor Murray's — fills her life  
With fuller meanings, maybe at the last  
This Something will reveal itself so clear  
That men like David Barrow can perceive.  
And Love, this spirit, twin of Death, you see  
Love slays this girl, but Love remains to slay,  
Lift up, drive on and slay. I call Death twin  
Of Love, and why? Because two things alone  
Make what we are and live, first Love the flame,  
And Death the cap that snuffs it. Is it bread  
That keeps us dancing, skating like these bugs  
That play criss-cross on evening waters? — no!  
It's bread to get more life to give more love,  
Bring to some heart a fuller life, receive  
A fuller life for having given life.  
This force of love may look demonical.  
It tears, destroys, and crushes, chokes and kills,  
Is always stretching hands to Death its twin.  
And yet it is creation and creates,  
Feeds roses, jonquils, columbines, gardenias,  
As well as thistles, cockle burrs and thorns.  
This is the force to which the girl's alert,  
And sensitive, is shaken by its power,  
Driven, uplifted, purified; a doll  
Of paper dancing on magnetic plates;  
And by that passion lusts for Death himself,  
For union with another, sacrifice,  
Beauty, and she aspires and toils, and turns  
To God, the symptom always of this nature.

## THE JURY DELIBERATES

My fellow-jurymen, you'll never see,  
Or learn so well about another soul  
That had this Love force deeper in her flesh,  
Her spirit, suffered more. Why do we suffer?  
What is this love force? 'Tis the child of blood  
Of madness, as this Elenor is the seed  
Of that old grandma, who was mad, and cousin  
Of Taylor who did murder. What is this  
But human spirit flamed and subtleized  
Until it is a poison and a food;  
A madness but a clearest sanity;  
A vision and a blindness, all as if  
When nature goes so far, refines so much  
Her balance has been broken, if the Something  
Makes not a genius or a giant soul.  
And so we suffer. But why do we suffer?  
Well, not as Barrow said, that life is bad;  
A failure and a fraud. Not suffering  
That points to dust, defeat, is painfulest;  
But suffering that points to skies and realms  
Above us, whence we came, or where we go,  
That suffering is most poignant, as it is  
Significant as well, and rapturous too.  
The pain that thrills us for the singing Flame  
Of Love, the force creative, that's the pain!  
And those must suffer most to whom the sounds  
Of music or of words, or scents, or scenes  
Recall lost realms. No soul can understand  
Music or words in whom there is not stirred  
A recollection — that is genius too:

## DOMESDAY BOOK

A memory, and reliving hours we lived  
Before we looked upon this world of man." . . .

Then Winthrop Marion said: " I like your talk,  
Llewellyn George, but still what killed the girl?  
What was the cause of death of Elenor Murray?  
She died from syncope, that's clear enough.  
The doctors tell us that in syncope  
The victim should be laid down, not held up.  
And Barrett Bays, the bungler, held her up  
When she was stricken — like the man, I think!  
Well, Coroner, suppose we make a verdict,  
And say we find that had this Barrett Bays  
Sustained this Elenor Murray in the war,  
And in her life, with friendship, and with faith  
She had not died. Suppose we further find  
That when he took her, held her in his arms  
When she had syncope, he was dull or crazed,  
And missed a chance to save her. We could find  
That had he laid her down when she was stricken  
She might have lived — I knew that much myself.  
And we could find that had he never driven  
This woman from his arms, but kept her there,  
Before said day of August 7th, no doubt  
She had not died on August 7th. In short,  
He held her up, and should have laid her down,  
And drove her from him when she needed arms  
To hold her up. And so we find her death  
Was due to Barrett Bays — we censure him,  
Would hold him to the courts — that cannot be —

## THE JURY DELIBERATES

And so we hold him up for memory  
Contemptuous, and say his bitter words  
Brought on the syncope, so long prepared  
By what he did. We write his course unfeeling,  
Weak, selfish, petty, flowing from the craze  
Of sexual jealousy, made worse by war,  
And universal madness, erethism  
Of hellish war. And, gentlemen, one thing:  
Paul Robert's article in the *Dawn* suggests  
Some things I credit, knowing them. We get  
Our notions of uncleanness from the Jews,  
The Pentateuch. There are no women here,  
And I can talk; — you know the ancient Jews  
Deemed sex unclean, and only to be touched  
At sufferance of Jehovah; birth unclean,  
A mother needing purification after  
Her hour of giving birth. You know their laws  
Concerning adultery. Well, they've tainted us  
In spite of Greece. Now look at Elenor Murray:  
What if she went with Gregory Wenner. Hell!  
Did that contaminate her, change her flesh,  
Or change her spirit? All this evidence  
Shows that it did not. But it changed this man,  
Because his mind was slime where snakes could breed.  
But now what do we see? That woman is  
Essential genius, man just mechanism  
Of conscious thought and strength. This Elenor  
Is wiser, being nature, than this man,  
And lives a life that puts this Barrett Bays  
To shame and laughter. Look at her: She's brave,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

Devoted, loyal, true and dutiful,  
She's will to life, and through it senses God,  
And seeks to serve the cosmic soul. I think  
This jury should start now to raise a fund  
To erect a statue of her in the park  
To keep her name and labors fresh in mind  
To those who shall come after."

"And I'll sign

A verdict in these words, but understand  
Such things are *Coram non iudice*; still  
We can chip in our money, start the fund  
To build this monument."

Ritter interrupted.

The banker said: "I'll start it with a hundred,"  
And so the fund was started.

Marion

Resumed to speak of riffles: "In Chicago  
There's less than half the people speaking English,  
The rest is Babel: Germans, Russians, Poles  
And all the tongues, much rippling going on,  
And if we couldn't trace the riffles out  
From Elenor Murray, we must give this up.  
One thing is sure: Look out for England, if  
America shall grow a separate soul.  
You may have congresses, and presidents,  
These states, but if America is a realm  
Of tribute as to thought, America

## THE JURY DELIBERATES

Is just a province. And it's past the time  
When we should be ourselves, we've wasted time,  
And grafted alien things upon our bole.  
A Domesday of the minds that think and know  
In our America would give us hope,  
We have them in abundance. What I hate  
Is that crude Demos which shouts down the minds,  
Outvotes them, takes these silly lies that move  
The populace and makes them into laws,  
And makes a village of a great republic."

And Merival listened as the jurymen  
Philosophied the case of Elenor Murray,  
And life at large. And having listened spoke:  
" I like the words Llewellyn George has said.  
Love is a sea which wrecks and sinks our craft,  
But re-creates the hands that build again;  
And like a tidal wave which sponges out  
An island or a city, lifts and leaves  
Fresh seeds and forms of beauty on the peaks.  
The whinchat in the mud upon its claws,  
Storm driven from its course to sea, brings life  
Of animal and plant to virgin shores,  
And islands strange and new. These happenings  
Of Elenor Murray carry beauty forth,  
Unhurt amid the storm-cloud, darkness, fire,  
To lives and eras. And our country too,  
So ruined and so weltering, like a ball  
Of mud made in a missile by a god  
May bear, no less, a pearl at core, a truth,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

A liberty, a genius, beauty,— thrown  
In mischief by the god, and staining walls  
Of this our temple; in a day to be  
Dried up, cracks open, and the pearl appears  
To be set in a precious time beyond  
Our time and vision. This is what I mean:  
Call Elenor egoist, and make her work,  
And life the means of rich return to her  
In exaltation, pride; — a missile of mud,  
It carries still the pearl of her, the seed  
Of finer spirits. We must open eyes  
To see inside the mud-ball. If it be  
We conquered slavery of the negro through,  
Because of economic forces, yet  
We conquered it. Trade, cotton, were the mud  
Upon the whinchat's claws containing seeds  
Of liberties to be, and carried forth  
In mid seas of the future to sunny isles,  
More blest than ours. And as for this, you know  
The English blotted slavery from their books  
And left their books unbalanced in point of cash,  
But balanced richly in a manhood gain.  
I warn you, David Barrow, pessimist,  
Against a general slur on life and man.  
Deride the Christian ethic, if you choose,  
You must retain its word of benevolence;  
Or better, you must honor man, whose heart  
Leaps up to its benevolence, from whose heart  
The Christian doctrine of benevolence  
Did issue to this world. If Christian doctrine



## THE JURY DELIBERATES

Be man-made, not a miracle, as it is  
All man-made, still it's out of generous fire  
Of human spirit; that's the thing divine. . . .  
Now how is Elenor Murray wonderful  
To me viewed through this mass of evidence?  
Why, as the soul maternal, out of which  
All goodness, beauty, and benevolence,  
All aspiration, sacrifice, all death  
For truth and liberty blesses life of us.  
This soul maternal, passion to create  
New life and guide it into happiness,  
Is Mother Mary of all tenderness,  
All charity, all vision, rises up  
From its obscurity and primal force  
Of romance, passion and the child, to realms,  
Democracies, republics; never flags  
To make them brighter, freer, so to spread  
Its ecstasy to all, and take in turn  
Redoubled ecstasy! The tragedy  
Is that this Elenor for her mother gift  
Is cursed and tortured, sent a wanderer;  
And in her death must find much clinging mud  
Around the pearl of her. If that be mud,  
Which we have heard, around her, is it mud  
That weights the soul of America, the pure  
Dream of our founders? Larger Athens, where  
All things should be heard gladly and considered,  
And men should grow, be forced to grow, because  
Not driven or restrained by usages,  
Or laws of mad majorities, but left

## DOMESDAY BOOK

At their own peril to work out their lives. . . .  
Well, gentlemen, I'll tell you what I've learned.  
What is a man or woman but a sperm  
Accreted into largeness? Still a sperm  
In likeness, being brain and spinal cord,  
Fed by the glands, the thyroid and the rest,  
Whose secrets we are ignorant of. We know  
That when they fail our minds fail. But the glands  
Are visible and clear: but in us whirl  
Emotions; fear, disgust, murder or wrath,  
Traced back to animals as moods of flight  
Repulsion, curiosity, all the rest.  
Now what are these but levers of our machine?  
Elenor Murray teaches this to me:  
Build up a science of these levers, learn  
To handle fear, disgust, anger, wonder.  
They teach us physiology; who teaches  
The use of instincts and emotions, powers?  
All learning may be that, but what is that?  
Why just a spread of food, where after nibbling  
You learn what you can eat, and what is good  
For you to eat. You'll see a different world  
When this philosophy of levers rules." . . .

Then Merival tacked round and said: "I'll show  
The ruffles in my life from Elenor Murray:  
The politicians give me notice now  
I cannot be the coroner again.  
I didn't want to be, but I had planned  
To go to Congress, and they say to that

## THE VERDICT

We do not want you. So my circle turns,  
And ruffles back to breeding better hogs,  
And finer cattle. Here's the verdict, sign  
Your names, and I'll return it to the clerk.

## THE VERDICT

“ An inquisition taken for the people  
Of the State of Illinois here at LeRoy,  
County aforesaid, on the 7th of August,  
Anno Domini, nineteen hundred nineteen,  
Before me, William Merival, coroner  
For the said County, viewing here the body  
Of Elenor Murray lying dead, upon  
The oath of six good lawful men, the same  
Of the said County, being duly sworn  
To inquire for the said people into all  
The circumstances of her death, the said  
Elenor Murray, and by whom the same  
Was brought about, and in what manner, when,  
And where she came to death, do say upon  
Their oaths, that Elenor Murray lying dead  
In the office of the coroner at LeRoy  
Came to her death on August 7th aforesaid  
Upon the east shore of the Illinois River  
A mile above Starved Rock, from syncope,  
While in the company of Barrett Bays,  
Who held her in his arms when she was seized,

## DOMESDAY BOOK

And should have laid her down when she was seized  
To give her heart a chance to resume its beat.”

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The jury signed the verdict and arose  
And said good-night to Merival, went their way.  
Next day the coroner went to Madison  
To look on Arielle, who had written him.







